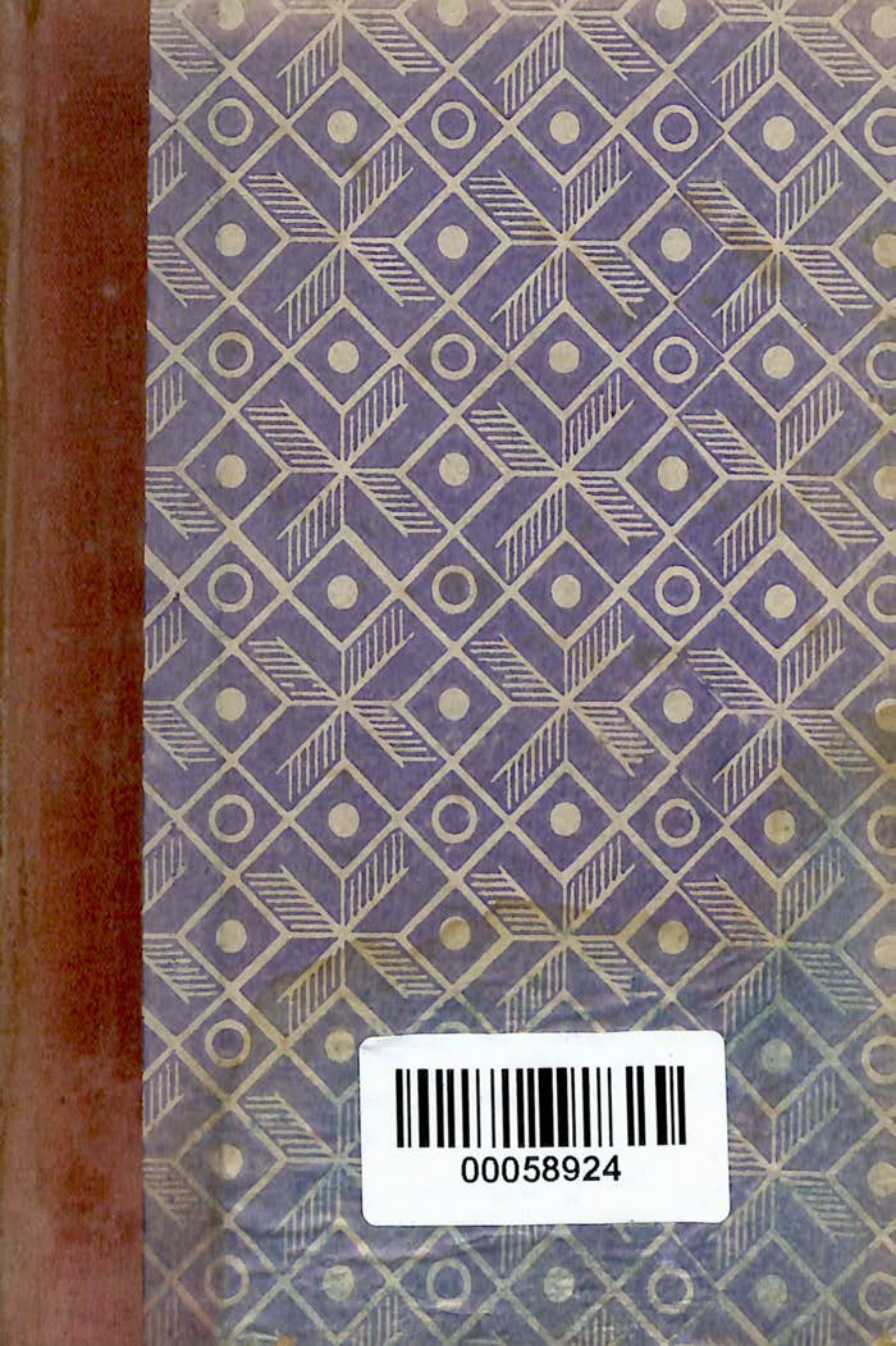
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THE MAGYARS:

THEIR COUNTRY AND INSTITUTIONS.

BY

ARTHUR J. PATTERSON,

FOREIGN MEMBER OF THE KISFALUDY SOCIETY.

WITH MAPS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER & CO., 15, WATERLOO PLACE.
1869.

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TO

MY NUMEROUS HUNGARIAN FRIENDS,

TO WHOSE KINDNESS AND HOSPITALITY

THIS BOOK OWES ITS EXISTENCE,

IT IS DEDICATED,

AS A SMALL TOKEN OF GRATITUDE AND ESTEEM.

PREFACE.

IT were the merest affectation to pretend that I do not expect many readers and more critics among the Hungarians themselves. To them I would only observe that I have aimed at candour and impartiality, and, if occasionally I have had to dwell upon their failings, it has been in no unfriendly spirit. This book contains no wilful misrepresentation of facts, although it may contain — doubtless does — many unintentional errors. For these my only excuse is the extreme difficulty which the most impartial observer experiences in endeavouring to comprehend a foreign people.

At the same time, this book is written not for the Hungarian, but for the English reader. Considerations of space have necessarily compelled me to

publish only a selection from the materials I had collected. It is hoped that the choice has been made sufficiently varied to interest several classes of English readers who may wish to make themselves acquainted with a country to which recent events have given increased importance. As the book combines the results of residence, travel, and study, it will be found to contain suggestions for the intending tourist as well as information for those who at home would study new forms of social and political life. I have given most prominence to those parts of the subject in which I myself am specially interested, merely indicating those to which, from a deficiency of knowledge or taste, I was unable to do justice. What an author has written as task-work his readers instinctively skip.

Where I do not speak from personal experience and private information, my knowledge is generally derived from native authorities. At the same time I have not thought it superfluous to refer to my predecessors in Hungarian travel, whether English or foreign. The reader will find several references to the books of Mr. Paget and Mr. Boner, both on points in which I agree with, and on those in which I differ

from them. I have also to acknowledge my obligations to the works of M. de Gérando, and to the admirable treatise on *Hungarian Agriculture*, by Dr. Ditz. And here I would seize the opportunity of thanking my numerous Hungarian friends, who, either in conversation or by correspondence, have assisted me in writing this book.

As the Magyar or Hungarian language is but very little known in England, three tables are subjoined; giving the sounds of the Hungarian alphabet; the meanings of the Hungarian words occurring in geographical proper names; and a list of such towns and rivers mentioned in this book as have different appellations in German and Hungarian.

London, November, 1869.

THE HUNGARIAN ALPHABET.

THE Hungarian Alphabet contains no sound which is not heard in the English or French languages, but it represents them by different letters from those which represent them in the languages of Western Europe. As the Hungarian orthography is much more rational than either English, French, or even German, a few rules will enable the reader to pronounce the Hungarian words occurring in the following pages with tolerable closeness. The accentuated or emphatic syllable of each word is in almost every instance its first syllable. The accents printed over the vowels are merely signs of quantity, and show that such vowels are long. The letters which require notice are the following :—

(1.) Vowels.....*a* has the sound of ..... *o* in not (nearly).
á ,, ,, *a* in father.
u ,, ,, *u* in bull.
ú ,, ,, *oo* in pool.
ö and *ő* are the short and long sounds of the French *eu* and the German *ö*.
ü and *ű* are the short and long sounds of the French *u* and the German *ü*.

¶ The remaining vowels are to be pronounced as in French.

(2.) Consonants.—*c* or *cz* has the sound of *ts* in *its*, like the German *z*.
cs ,, ,, *ch* in *ch*urch.
g ,, ,, *g* hard, as in *g*et.
j ,, ,, *y* in *y*et.
s ,, ,, *sh* in *sh*in.
sz ,, ,, *s* in *s*in.

v, *z* are pronounced as in English.

zs has the sound of *s* in pleasure or *z* in azure, like the French *j*.

w with the sound of ..... *v*
y ,, ,, *i*
th ,, ,, *t*
are only used in proper names.

ly, *ny*, *ty*, *gy* are the sounds heard in *fil*ial, new (*nyoo*), tune (*tyoon*), dew (*dyoo*).

¶ All the remaining consonants are to be pronounced as in English.

HUNGARIAN WORDS OCCURRING IN THE NAMES OF PLACES, ETC.

al ..... (*in composition*) lower
bánya ..... mine
érsek ..... archbishop
falu ..... village
fehér ..... white
fekete ..... black
fel..... (*in composition*) upper
fő ..... head
föld ..... land, earth
füred, fürdő..... bath, watering-place
halom ..... mound, hill
hegy..... mountain
hely ..... place
kis ..... little
kő..... stone, rock
kút ..... a well
magyar ..... Hungarian
mező ..... meadow, pasture
nagy..... great
német ..... German
ó ..... old
oláh ..... Wallach
ország ..... realm, country
patak ..... brook
püspök..... bishop
sár ..... mud
sáros..... muddy
sebes ..... swift, rapid
szabad ..... free, privileged
szász..... Saxon
szeg ..... corner
szék ..... seat
szent..... Saint
sziget ..... island
tót ..... Slovack, Slavonic
udvar ..... court
uj ..... new
vár ..... fortress
várad ..... fortified town
város ..... town, city
vas ..... iron
vásár ..... market

COMPARATIVE LIST
OF HUNGARIAN AND GERMAN NAMES OF TOWNS, DISTRICTS, AND RIVERS.

Hungarian.	*German.*
Pest	Pesth
Buda	Ofen
Ó Buda	Altofen
Bécs	Wien (Vienna)
Sopron	Oedenburg
Mosony	Wieselburg
Vasvár	Eisenburg
Kőszeg	Güns
Győr	Raab
Pannonhalma	Martinsberg
Tata	Dotis
Esztergom	Gran
Székes Fehérvár	Stuhlweissenburg
Pécs	Fünfkirchen
Zágráb	Agram
Pétervárad	Peterwardein
Pozsony	Presburg
Komárom	Komorn
Vácz	Waitzen
Érsek Ujvár	Neuhausel
Nagy Szombat	Tirnau
Léva	Lewenz
Selmecz	Schemnitz
Zolyom	Altsohl
Besztercze-bánya	Neusohl
Szepes	Zips
Bártfa	Bartfeld
Kassa	Kaschau

Hungarian.	*German.*
Eger	Erlau
Nagy Várad	Gross Wardein
Szeged	Szegedin
Szabadka	Theresiopel
Kolozsvár	Klausenburg
Thorda	Thordenburg
Károly- (formerly) Gyula-	Fehérvár (Karlsburg (formerly) Weissenburg)
Szász Sebes	Mühlenbach
Nagy Szeben	Hermannstadt
Brassó	Kronstadt
Segesvár	Schässburg
Maros Vásárhely	Neumarkt
Szász Regen	Sächsisch Reen
Szamos Ujvár	Armenierstadt

Jászság			Jazygien
Nagy / Kis	Kúnság.	Gross / Klein	Kumanien
Székelföld			Szeklerland

Duna	Donau (Danube)
Tisza	Theiss
Ipoly	Eipel
Olt	Alt
Zsil	Schyl

ERRATA.

Volume 1, p. 2, line 16, *for* "north-east" *read* "north-west."

Volume 1, p. 164, line 1, *for* "*wram*" *read* "*uram.*"

Volume 2, p. 120, line 2, *for* "third Prince Sigismund" *read* "last Prince Gabriel."

Volume 2, p. 233, line 6, *for* "Haromszek" *read* "Háromszék."

Volume 2, p. 234, line 25, *for* "Borszek" *read* "Borszék."

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J. C. Chanter

London: Smith, Elder & C°. 15, Waterloo Place 1869.

THE MAGYARS.

ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

Origin of the present Work—My Three Visits to Hungary—Limits of my Wanderings in that Country—Knowledge of the Magyar Language—Peculiar Character of this Book—The Magyars little known in England—Importance of the Subject—New Organization of the Austro-Hungarian Empire — Superior Compactness of Hungary—Austrian Reichsrath and Hungarian Diet—The "Delegations"—Statistics of Territory and Population—The Magyars, their Number and Position—Magyar Conquest of Hungary—Meaning of the Word "Magyar"—"Nationality" defined—Present material Development of the Country—Hungary as a Field for Tourists; for the Antiquarian; for the Sportsman—Scenery—Natural History—Politics and Sociology—Hungary and Russia.

THE present work is the result of three visits to Hungary of five, eleven, and twenty-three months respectively. I first entered the country in March, 1862, when the nation was suffering from the disap-

pointment of the hopes excited by the convocation of the Diet of 1861. I last quitted it immediately after the coronation of the present sovereign, in the Whitsuntide of 1867. A large portion of the time was spent in the capital, but I also stayed for several weeks together in some of the provincial towns, such as Szegedin, Debreczin, and Miskolcz, and in several country houses. In 1864 I made a tour through Transylvania and the north-east of Hungary. I have thus seen the greater part of the area inhabited by the Magyars, from Presburg on the Austrian frontier to Kronstadt in the extreme south-east of Transylvania; from Munkács in the north-east to the Lake Balaton in the south-west. I know little or nothing from personal acquaintance of the Slovack area on the north-east, or of the Croatians and Serbs along the southern frontier. By thus concentrating my attention on the most powerful nationality and the most widely-diffused language of the country, I flatter myself that I acquired a more thorough and better-grounded knowledge of what is really important in its social and political circumstances than if I had endeavoured, during the same space of time, to acquire a superficial acquaintance with the three or four other dialects spoken within its bounds. As I learnt the Magyar language so as to read with ease and to converse with average facility, I was able to derive information from

classes and individuals with whom the majority of travellers from Western Europe could have held no direct communication. To my knowledge of this language I owe the greater part of the information I have collected respecting the *nuances* that distinguish the several classes and parties amongst the Magyars themselves.

This book will be found to differ from those which have previously appeared in the English language on Hungary in two particulars. First, it takes into account the most recent events, especially the reconciliation between the nation and the Crown in 1867, Mr. Boner, my latest predecessor, having published his book on "Transylvania" in 1865. Secondly, it considers the national character of the Magyars, and their historical supremacy over the other inhabitants of the land, as the central point from which the social phenomena of Hungary can be best surveyed and understood, and its future prospects may be most correctly divined. As I believe that a people can be best judged by a foreigner who has taken the trouble to look at them from their own point of view, I took especial pains, both by study and conversation, to make myself acquainted with Hungarian opinions about things Hungarian. It is hoped that the result will give the English reader a clearer and more life-like idea of a people who have so many claims on our interest and our sympathy. To most of us the

Hungarians are merely unfamiliar names, mis-spelt in Mr. Reuter's telegrams. To others, again, the word "Magyar" calls up recollections of the diamonds of Prince Eszterházy, or the revolutionary eloquence of M. Kossuth; neither of them personages from whom a true idea of the average Hungarian could be formed. The Hungarians are divided into distinct social classes, and the national character cannot be rightly understood without including in the comparison not only the lawyer and the magnate, but also the country gentleman, the peasant, and the artisan.

As my subject is somewhat unfamiliar to the English reading public, it may not be superfluous to state precisely its claims to attention. The political mass which we are still accustomed to call Austria—although the more correct expression, Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, is every day gradually becoming more in vogue—has not yet forfeited its claims to be reckoned one of the five great powers of Europe. In this state the Magyars may be said to have a prerogative vote. Since the reconciliation in 1867 it consists of two closely-allied monarchies, each having equal rights both of internal administration and of control over the policy of the common federal government. One of these monarchies is the Kingdom of Hungary; the other, for want of a more correct name, is called the Empire of Austria, and

sometimes Cisleithania.* Theoretically, these two states are equally sovereign, and confederated together on the basis of complete equality; practically, we shall find the balance of advantages to turn, if at all, slightly in favour of Hungary.

In wealth, population, and civilization, the western, or Cisleithanian half of the federal empire, is decidedly superior. It is, on the other hand, geographically less compact, stretching as it does from the frontiers of Bessarabia to the shores of the Lake of Constance, and inhabited by populations not only differing more widely than those of the Hungarian kingdom in the degrees of civilization they have respectively attained, but also bound together by much fewer ties of either material or ideal interests. The Hungarian kingdom has a common history reaching back for several centuries. The union of the Polish and German provinces of Cisleithania was accomplished by violence at the end of the last century. An even more important consideration is, that the centre of gravity of the Magyars, the dominant nationality in the Hungarian kingdom, falls within the bounds of the empire; whereas that of the Germans, the dominant nationality in Cisleithania, falls without those bounds. And although there is still a large measure of opposition against Magyar

* From the Leitha, a small stream, a tributary of the Danube, separating Hungary from Lower Austria.

supremacy in Hungary, against that may be set the equally inveterate opposition of the Poles, Slovenians, and Tchekhs—especially of the latter—against German supremacy in Cisleithania.

From these three considerations it is evident that Cisleithania is in greater danger of dismemberment than the Hungarian kingdom. This difference between the two states is reflected in their present constitution, especially in the composition of their sovereign legislatures. The Cisleithanian Reichsrath—of course I mean its Lower House—is composed of representatives of the several provinces or "crown-lands," called kingdoms, duchies, marquisates, counties, &c. These representatives are elected by the respective diets or provincial legislatures of the crown-lands. The diet of the kingdom of Bohemia is represented in the Reichsrath by fifty-four deputies; that of the marquisate of Moravia by twenty-two; the diets of the arch-duchies of Upper and Lower Austria send respectively ten and eighteen; and so on, even such small legislatures as those of Austrian Silesia, the Bukovina, and Salzburg contributing their several quotas of six, five, and three members to the Reichsrath. There are no less than fourteen such provincial diets in Cisleithania. In Hungary, on the contrary, we find no such complicated arrangement. The Hungarian diet is at once Reichsrath and provincial diet for the whole of Hungary and Transylvania.

The only portion of the Hungarian kingdom which has a separate legislature and a recognized internal autonomy is the small allied kingdom (*socium regnum*) of Croatia and Slavonia, an exception so insignificant as to throw into stronger relief the rule that Hungary represents unity, and Austria division.

The two sovereign legislatures, viz. the Austrian Reichsrath and the Hungarian Diet, exercise their control over the common government by means of the original institution known as the "Delegations." Every annual session each of these legislatures selects an equal number of its members to form a delegation, which has the power of granting or refusing the supplies demanded by the common ministry. They have, however, no power of making laws, nor of discussing questions of legislation properly so called. The action of the common ministry is carefully restricted to common affairs, viz. the army, the diplomatic service, and the funds requisite for their support. The two delegations sit alternately in Vienna and Pest. They are not allowed to debate in common, but in case of disagreement between them, each may send the other a written message, containing arguments in favour of its own policy. This message must be drawn up in the official language—German or Hungarian—of the delegation sending it, accompanied by an authorised translation

in the language of the delegation to which it is sent. Should three such messages on either side be exchanged without bringing the two bodies into accord, they meet together, and, without further debate, at once proceed to vote by ballot, the majority of votes deciding. Such is the link which binds together the two halves of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. It would be premature to pronounce any decided opinion as yet on the permanence of this novel arrangement; but during the few years it has been in operation no serious dissensions have arisen between the two delegations.

As on our maps the territories of Hungary and Austria are seldom, if ever, distinguished, it may not be out of place to state precisely the proportion they bear to one another. In doing so, it will perhaps be as well to consider Dalmatia and the Military Frontier apart from either. The first territory, with the title of kingdom, is at present represented in the Cisleithanian legislature. It is, however, claimed as *de jure* belonging to the Hungarian Crown, and, from its geographical position, will probably revert to it. The Military Frontier, again, is universally admitted to belong by right to the Hungarian Crown, but it is at present governed provisionally by the common Ministry of War for the whole empire, and as yet has no share in the constitutional government either of Hungary or of Cisleithania. The extent and popu-

lation of these four divisions of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy are as follows :—

Political Divisions.	Area in German Geographical Square Miles.	Population.
Lands represented in Reichsrath (exclusive of Dalmatia)	5,219·58	19,162,031
Lands represented in Hungarian Diet	5,244·00	13,712,034
Military Frontier	609·38	1,119,120
Dalmatia	232·36	440,705
Whole Austro-Hungarian Empire	11,305·32	34,433,890

The accompanying map distinguishes these four divisions of the monarchy from each other, and also those portions of Cisleithania which formerly formed part of the German Confederation from those which belonged to the Polish Republic.

It is beyond the scope of this work to notice the complications presented by the question of nationalities in the Polish and German provinces of the empire. Similar complications in the Hungarian kingdom are discussed at large in some of the following chapters. There the Magyars, or Hungarians proper, form the most important element of the population. Their numbers are variously stated by hostile or friendly statisticians. It has been reckoned, taking the census of 1850-1 as the basis, that in 1857 their numbers in the whole empire were 4,947,134, thus forming 15·3 per cent. of the population, or 35·4 per cent. of that of the Hungarian kingdom. On the

other hand a native statistician, M. Fényes, reckons their numbers in Hungary proper alone at 5,314,202, without counting those in Transylvania, Slavonia, or the Military Frontier. But a mere statement of their numbers alone would give the reader a false impression of their relative importance. They include, in Hungary and Transylvania, almost all the educated and wealthy classes, especially those of the great landholders and lesser gentry. A large proportion of the land held as freehold by peasant proprietors belongs to them, and comprises, generally speaking, the most fertile and most accessible portions of the country. Again, it is the Magyars who originally constituted the Hungarian kingdom, and still form the band that keeps it together. Their relations to the other nationalities of the country will be more fully discussed hereafter. At present I would only remind the reader that in the last decade of the ninth century of our era, a Turanian horde of Finnish, Turkish, or mixed race, crossed the Carpathians from Bessarabia and Eastern Gallicia, and entered Hungary, of which country they effected the complete conquest in about five years. The territory now called Hungary and Transylvania was at that time broken up into several principalities, governed by Wallachian, Bulgarian, and Slav chieftains, some of the latter acknowledging the feudal suzerainty of the Carlovingian kings of Germany. The conquest is com-

monly alluded to by the Hungarians as the *honfoglalás*, "occupation of the fatherland," an event which occupies much the same place in their family histories that the Norman Conquest does in ours.

The descendants of these Turanian immigrants of the ninth century call themselves "Magyar." In the oldest native documents we find the forms *Moger*, *Mager*, *Megcr*. It is of uncertain etymology, but has been supposed by some to mean "confederate." The Byzantine and German historians do not use this appellation; the former calling them Τουρκοι, "Turks," the latter *Hungari*. This last name has been adopted by the modern nations of Western Europe. Many of the Hungarians consider it an insult to be called Magyars in other languages than their own. They consider the use of the word "*Magyaren*" in a German mouth to convey the imputation not only of barbarism but also of their being one out of many nationalities who inhabit Hungary on an equal footing. "*Magyar*" they consider to be a Hungarian word, the German equivalent of which is "*Ungar*."

The word "nationality" is here used in the sense it bears in the East of Europe, and not in its legal sense in the phrase "the nationality of a British subject." The idea of nationality must not be confounded with those of race or nation. It does not necessarily imply either a community of physical

origin, like the former, nor of sovereign political institutions, like the latter. We speak of the Jewish race or the Negro race, although there is no Negro nation, and the Jewish nation has long ago ceased to exist. Again, we speak of the Swiss as a nation, although there is no Swiss race. By nationality is meant a certain community of language and national sentiment, without *necessarily* implying a community of origin, or that its members belong to the same political state. In this sense we speak of the Welch, Breton, and Bask nationalities, although there is no Welch, Breton, or Bask nation. The last-named nationality is divided between the French and Spanish nations. The insular and peninsular character of Western Europe makes such instances of divided allegiance rare. In Eastern Europe they may be said to be the rule. For instance, the Roumans or Wallachs live under six several governments—the Hungarian, the Austrian, the Russian, the Turkish, the Servian, and the Roumanian.

In the case of Hungary and the Hungarians, the reader should bear in mind that there is a Magyar race, a Magyar or a Hungarian nationality, and a Hungarian nation. The first would include only those persons who have pure Magyar blood in their veins, and is an entity interesting only to the theoretical ethnologist or anthropologist. The second, a larger, and at the same time, a more visible body,

contains all those who, whether rightly or wrongly, think themselves Magyars, or wish to be considered by others as such. But the Hungarian nation includes all who owe allegiance to the Hungarian Crown, and are citizens of the Hungarian State. The reader is requested to bear in mind the distinction between these three expressions.

As one of the first results of the reconciliation effected in 1867 has been an immense increase of commercial and industrial enterprise, the number of Englishmen who visit Hungary upon business has already largely increased. Before that date one of the most effectual hindrances to the employment of foreign—viz. West European—capital in the country, was the apathy and insecurity produced by the want of accord between the nation and its rulers. English capitalists are already engaged in the construction of new lines of railway in the Hungarian kingdom, and this has already attracted thither a great many Englishmen as civil engineers, or in other capacities.

So rapid at present is the extension of railway communication, that any detailed account of the accessibility of the different parts of the country would in a few months become obsolete. Here it may be sufficient to say that Pest is but eight hours distant from Vienna by railway, and from the Hungarian capital lines extend northward to the foot

of the Carpathians, eastward into the heart of Transylvania, south-eastward to the frontiers of Servia and Wallachia, and south-westward to the Adriatic. The English traveller can thus reach in a few days some of the most primitive portions of Europe, described in no guide-books and spoilt by no tourists, where hospitality is not yet forgotten, while revolvers and armed escorts are already obsolete. The customs and manners of their inhabitants are now in a period of transition, and consequently exhibit a curious admixture of former barbarism and intrusive civilization. Perhaps, in a few years, they too will have become prosaically undistinguished from the people of Western Europe. The ordinary traveller will have no difficulty in making himself understood in German by the innkeepers and waiters of this polyglot land. In all the towns and many of the villages the innkeepers are, for the most part, either Germans or German-speaking Jews. In many cases he will find the Hungarian who drives him, either in an open waggon or a caleche, will understand enough German for the purposes of the journey.

I hope that my experiences of residence and travel will give the intending tourist a fair idea of the amount of ease, comfort, and security which he may expect in Hungary and Transylvania. That I have given accounts of but one or two of my trips is to be attributed to the fact that my movements partook for

the most part of the character of visits to my numerous friends and acquaintances.

Hungary—which name is in this book generally intended to include Transylvania—is a large country, and the ordinary vacation tourist could hardly see more than a small portion of it in one trip. He should, therefore, select some particular neighbourhood to be explored, according to his tastes and the time of year in which he may make his visit. Considering the extent of the country, Hungary is not rich in objects of interest for the antiquarian. What there are are chiefly to be found in the more mountainous districts, in the North-western Carpathians, and in Transylvania. The latter country still contains several castles or fortified dwelling-houses, for the most part of the Renaissance period. In the south-western corner of the principality is the royal castle of Vajda Hunyad, according to Mr. Boner's testimony, "the most picturesque of castles, ruinous and blasted by fire, but still grand in its proportions, and imposing from its massive and commanding forms." Transylvania also contains several curious specimens of Gothic architecture, both ecclesiastical and domestic, in the towns and villages of the German colonists. The finest specimen of mediæval architecture in the kingdom is the cathedral of Kaschau, at the foot of the Northern Carpathians, and at present the terminus of one of the Hungarian railways. It will soon be

extended northward to Eperies, the centre of a district colonized by Germans in the Middle Ages. As the Germans were the principal, I may say the only, mediæval architects in Hungary, this district, the Zips, contains several curious old towns and castles. In these two portions of the country travelling is pleasant when the summer heat is excessive on the plains.

For the sportsman, again, not only the broad moors and vast virgin forests of Transylvania will have attractions, but the course of the Danube and the Theiss abound in winter with vast quantities of water-fowl. The hospitable and friendly character of Hungarian society will here be of great assistance to the English sportsman, as several of them have already experienced.

Nor are larger game wanting. The bear and the wild boar are still to be found in Transylvania. The beech-forests of that principality and of the north-east of Hungary still harbour the lynx. Chamois are to be met with among the peaks of the southern Carpathians, while the wolf is but too common in all parts of the country.

For the lovers of the picturesque—for those who travel only to see scenery, striking, and at the same time different from that which we have at home—both the great plains and the surrounding hills afford a comparatively untrodden ground. The great central

plain of Hungary, as the most striking feature in its physical geography, and the most important factor in its past and future development, will be described at some length. Its peculiarly impressive landscapes cannot be seen with comfort by the tourist during the heat of summer, and the heavy rains of autumn, when they once set in, soon render the roads impassable. It is in spring, when the whole plain is covered with fresh verdure, that they should be crossed by the traveller. Of Transylvania, I would merely quote the opinion of our countryman, Mr. Paget, who says that "travelling in Transylvania presents a succession of beautiful scenes rarely to be met with in other lands." This remark he makes of the roads that pass through the principal valleys. Those who penetrate into the more secluded valleys, such as that of the Zsil, on the frontiers of Wallachia, will find scenery still more picturesque, but, of course, at the cost of some of the comforts of civilization.

Another more recent traveller, Professor Ansted, in his *Short Trip in Hungary and Transylvania*, has set forth the claims of those countries on the English naturalist. Their continental situation makes their flora peculiarly rich in species. Mr. Boner found in the south of Transylvania plants of the Caucasus side by side with those of Spain,* and the fauna of that country is characterized by the same features.

* *Transylvania*, p. 525.

For myself, neither antiquities, sport, scenery, nor natural science took me into the country. I was especially interested in the additional light which the institutions and historical fortunes of the country throw upon the problems of sociology and political science. These subjects will be found to take up the largest portion of space of this work. Indeed, the "general reader" may perhaps complain of having so much politics forced upon him. But a book on Hungary, which contained no political discussions, would be like a critique on the play of *Hamlet*, which took no notice of the madness of its hero. The Hungarian constitution grew up under influences unfamiliar to Western Europe, and, consequently, many of its developments are interesting because original. The East of Europe, comprising the three empires of Russia, Austria, and Turkey, is at present in a state of unstable equilibrium, if it were not more correct to describe it as a political chaos. In it Hungary and Russia are the two most clearly defined elements in striking antagonism to each other. It has been well observed that what makes Russia so interesting is the fact that it is an Aryan nation working its way towards European civilization without having passed through the preparatory school of Feudalism and Latin Christianity. Hungary, on the contrary, is interesting as being the only non-Aryan nation that has been subjected to the discipline of

Latin Christianity, and, in a modified form, to that of the Feudal system, and has been recognized as a member of the European family. This unique position of the Magyars can hardly fail to interest other students of history besides myself.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS—BUDA-PEST.

First Entry into Pest—Gentlemen's Costume—Terra Incognita—Spring Weather—Streets of Buda-Pest—Shops—View from the Fortress—Blocksberg—Storming of Buda in 1849—The various Quarters of Pest—Bridges and Steamers—Hot Baths—A Moslem Shrine—Pilgrims—The Suspension-Bridge—The new Quay—Buildings on the River—Hungarianism of Pest—German Origin—National Theatre—National Museum—Town Park—Unhealthiness of Pest.

THE first time I visited Hungary was in the March of 1862. I had travelled by railway direct from Berlin, and arrived at Pest about nine o'clock in the evening. I had no sooner got into a fiacre than I felt the great change from police-ridden Prussia. The pace at which the driver rattled over the hard streets, with two spirited little Hungarian horses, formed a most exhilarating contrast to the regulation crawl of a Berlin droschky.

I had been recommended to go to the "Jäger-horn," as a good Hungarian hotel, and soon found myself seated at supper in its "restauration." It was

the first time in my life that I had seen the national costume of Hungarian gentlemen—at that time *de rigueur*, by way of demonstration against the Viennese Government. I could hardly help smiling: the dress thus worn by all the guests made the place look to me like the supper-room of a costume ball, from which the ladies were somehow unaccountably absent. Of course this impression wore off in a day or two; but even after many months' residence in Hungary, I could count it one of the charms of travelling in that country, that there was a stamp of individuality even on the dress of the people whom I met—that they did not all look as if they had just come out of Bond Street or the Rue de Rivoli. Since the coronation of Francis Joseph, in 1867, the Hungarian gentry, at any rate in the capital, have to a great extent adopted "German," *i.e.* European, dress. As one of the extreme Nationalists said to me, "Civilization is getting too strong for us." The national costume is, however, still sufficiently common to give the English tourist an impression of originality and strangeness.

Another peculiarity of the country obtruded itself upon my notice with equal suddenness. A gentleman to whom I had an introduction was already in the supper-room. He observed with respect to it, "This is a very good 'restauration;' one seldom meets any of the military here." Such complications of politics

and social life were the first things I noticed, and I was never allowed to forget them.

Even so lately as 1835 one who wrote an account of Hungary could give his work the appropriate title *Terra Incognita.* Such an "unknown land" was it to me when I first entered it. Wisely or unwisely, I had determined to see it with my own eyes before trusting myself to read the accounts which others had written about it. As far as reading was concerned, I knew of Hungary only what any other Englishman might have picked up in the columns of the daily papers, and the scanty one-sided information contained in the concluding section of Mr. Murray's *Handbook for Southern Germany.* Even Mr. Paget's admirable work I had as yet refrained from perusing. Of her mediæval history I knew only so much as might be gleaned from the scattered notices of Gibbon. Her classical era, in my eyes, was the revolutionary war of 1848-9, which as a boy I had followed with so much interest through the reports of English journals. My plan had its disadvantages, but also its advantages. What I learned, I learned slowly; but I had the satisfaction of having myself collected my data, here a little and there a little.

The memory of those first weeks which I spent in Pest, while all was for me still *terra incognita,* has not yet lost its charms. In one respect I had chosen the time for my visit well. During the cold wet

winter passed in Berlin, the words of Horace, "*Frigora mitescunt Zephyris*," rang continually in my ears. As luck would have it, spring came upon us all at once, and I had transported myself from a northern to a southern and more favourable latitude at the very time when the winter broke up. The effect of the two causes combined was magical. To one accustomed to the treacherous backsliding spring of London it was very charming to be able to saunter about in summer costume before April. Professor Ansted, who visited the country in the May of that exceptional year, supposed that it was always as warm; but the testimony of everybody I asked on the point, together with my subsequent experiences, taught me that though the cold of winter and the heat of summer are more extreme in Hungary than in our own island, there is no such appreciable difference in the intermediate seasons.

Now that they are connected by Mr. Tierney Clarke's splendid suspension-bridge, Pest on the left and Buda on the right side of the Danube may be regarded as one city. They contain, together with, their suburbs, a population of more than 200,000 souls, but, as they stretch about two miles along the river's side, they would be called straggling in any other country than Hungary. Situated in the centre of the polyglot empire of Austria, on the banks of its great artery the Danube, well furnished with

railway and river communications, a large commercial emporium, the capital of a great kingdom, the seat of the provincial government,* and withal strongly garrisoned, Buda-Pest presents in its central quarters a most animating spectacle. Under whatever political or social evils it may suffer, there is life in the place. Laborious Germans from the Black Forest, portly Servians swathed in broad full girdles from the Lower Danube, and occasionally a dervish or a merchant from the Mohammedan East, jostle one another in its crowded thoroughfares. In all the more fashionable streets the stranger's ear is charmed or irritated by the clink of some white-coated officer's sabre. The extreme contrast between the weekday working dress of the Hungarian peasant and the showy apparel of the Hungarian dandy adds to the gay confusion. Nor do the Jews fail to contribute to the picturesque variety. You see three sorts of them in the streets, quite distinct from one another as far as the outward man is concerned. One of them is the well-known German Jew, in the monotonous costume of Western Europe; the second is the Hungarian Jew, determined in dress at least to out-magyar the Magyars themselves; while in strong contrast to both, stands the new arrival from Poland, in a long threadbare coat, something between a paletôt and a dressing-gown, his two wiry ringlets witnessing to the strictness with

* In 1862; but now of the *national* government.

which he observes the ordinances of Moses, who has said, "Thou shalt not cut the corners of thy beard."

The shops, which are numerous and well-arranged, are at once individualized and ornamented by pictures, which deserve to be placed in the very first rank of sign-painting. You may buy your cigars at the "Hungarian Magnate's," procure your kid gloves at the "Bridegroom's," and get I know not what other trifles at the "Englishman's" and the "Tyrolese Hunter's." Ladies will, perhaps, be attracted by the "Bride" or the "Beautiful Shepherdess." Some of these signs are appropriate, others less so; almost all are well painted. One class will be especially noticed, namely, those affixed to the apothecaries' shops. The healing art has, in the eyes of the Hungarian public, not yet lost its semi-sacred character. I have observed in different parts of the town the following druggists' signs:— "To the Holy Trinity," "To the Holy Ghost," "To the Saviour," "To the Holy Mary, Mother of God," "To St. Stephen the King." But these Christian symbols do not necessarily exclude heathen ones; so that you may remark such incongruities as the picture of a saint working miracles on one shutter, and on the other the busts of Æsculapius and Spes.

Here, as in Vienna, the tradesmen advertise their goods in such a variety of languages, that a saunter through the streets may be turned to profit by a student of comparative philology. Indeed I acquired

my first ideas of the peculiarities of Hungarian construction in that peripatetic school on Hamiltonian principles. The chief difference in respect of this point between the Austrian and Hungarian capitals, seems to be that the former exhibits fewer Hungarian inscriptions, while Polish, Bohemian, and Italian ones are very rare in the latter. French is frequently to be met with, put up, I suspect, more from ostentation than because it is really wanted. English occurs, too; being, perhaps, intended as a sort of guarantee for the genuineness of the English saddles or English penknives on sale within.

The visitor at Pest had better proceed at once over the suspension-bridge, and climb up the hill to the "Fortress" of Buda. He will then have a fine view of the surrounding country, and a distinct idea of the different characters of the twin cities. The broad stream of the Danube divides at this point a range of porphyry hills from a wide sandy plain. On an isolated spur of the former stands that quarter of Buda known as the "Fortress," and occupying the whole summit of the oblong hill, not unlike in shape to the Acropolis of Athens. The other portions of Buda—all mean, some wretched—lie clustered around in the valleys between it and the larger Schwabenberg and Blocksberg.

The latter is one vast mass of porphyry, overhanging the swift stream in which it mirrors its rugged

precipices. It derives its German name from a block-house on the summit, erected during the Turkish wars; but it is called by the Hungarians *Gellerthegy*, "Gerhard's Mountain," in memory of a bishop of Csanád martyred by them during the heathen reaction of 1046. It is now surmounted by a modern fortification, built since the revolutionary war, with the avowed purpose of laying Pest in ashes at the very first alarm of an insurrection. Its threatening position would enable it to do so with terrible success. When, in 1862, I walked or drove down the long narrow street of the *Wasserstadt*, between the "Fortress" and the river, I saw the cannon peering ominously out of the portholes overhead, an unmistakeable sign of the distrust which had so long existed between the Government and the people of this unfortunate country. The military capabilities of these positions have not been practically tested since 1849, when the science of destruction had not as yet received the great impulse given to it by the Crimean war. At that time the Austrian guns in the "Fortress" were not found equal to bombarding Pest throughout its whole extent, although they inflicted a great deal of damage upon a large portion of the town. I should imagine that, with the improved artillery, the "Fortress" must now have the very furthest corner of the wide-spread city lying at its mercy. However, that is rendered a matter of little

practical importance by the erection of new fortifications on the Blocksberg, which effectually command not only Pest but the "Fortress" itself. But the progress of the military science of destruction has its beneficent side. Populous capital cities have now become so evidently untenable that they will be declared, one after another, open places, and thus spared the horrors of a bombardment. This was seen in 1866, when the Austrians not only abandoned Prague without a struggle, but would, if the war had continued, have done the same in the case of Vienna itself. Nor is Buda-Pest more defensible than the Austrian capital, for, as the Blocksberg commands the "Fortress," the loftier Schwabenberg commands both.

It was on these two heights that Görgei established his batteries in the memorable siege of Buda, May, 1849. The operations were so badly managed, and their final results were so disastrous to the national cause, that even now the partisans of that general and of Kossuth wrangle as to which of these two ought to be justly blamed as the real author of the siege. In the square of the "Fortress," a monument has been set up to the memory of the Austrian commander Hentzi, the Leonidas of the Imperialists. On its sides are inscribed one by one the names of the 418 Croats, who fell with him in his obstinate and gallant defence of the place against the

numbers and fury of the Hungarian host. A covered staircase, leading up to the *Pfarrkirche*, was the scene of a sanguinary struggle, where an assailing party of Hungarians met a party of Imperialists making a sally. It is said that a few days after 700 corpses were taken out of this staircase.

A mediæval church, and the modern palace of the Emperor-King, are contained in the "Fortress." From its western terrace we may admire the picturesque slopes of the Schwabenberg, green with vineyards, and dotted with the summer villas of the richer citizens of the capital. Between us and that mountain lies the Christinenstadt. It is connected with the suspension-bridge by means of a tunnel, which pierces the hill on which the "Fortress" stands. From this suburb starts the railway to Trieste.

If we leave the western and proceed to the eastern terrace, we have spread before us the beautiful panorama of the Danube, with its picturesque wooded islands, spanned by the magnificent suspension-bridge, and lined by the long glittering quays of Pest, which is seen stretching away from the other end of the bridge somewhat in the shape of a fan. Beyond and around the city lies a vast sandy plain, the slight elevations which really exist in it being imperceptible by comparison with the immense space over which the eye can range.

The town itself may be roughly divided into three parts, each having more or less its own distinct character. The two first divisions lie along the bank of the river; the *Innere Stadt* below the bridge, and the *Leopoldstadt* above it; the third comprises all the rest of the town lying away from the river. The *Innere Stadt* is of course the older part, but it contains scarcely anything which is of an earlier date than the final expulsion of the Turks in 1686. A portion of the *Pfarrkirche*, a specimen of later Gothic, may be mentioned as an exception. This quarter of the town is the most fashionable. It contains many palaces of the aristocracy, the university, the law-courts, the county-hall, the town-hall, the best shops, and the most frequented streets. It is not, however, the most commodious, or the best built quarter. This praise must be reserved for the Leopoldstadt, which stands higher than the Innere Stadt, has larger and handsomer houses, is more wholesome and airy, and, above all, is provided with drinkable water, which is more than its older rival can boast of. *Experto crede.* I have tried living a few months in each of them. The Leopoldstadt has been built within the last thirty or forty years, and may be regarded as a sort of monument to commemorate the success which has attended the speculations of the children of Israel in this very commercial city. The remainder of the town is often spoken of as the *paraszt város* (peasant

town), and exhibits some of the peculiarities of the true Magyar towns, Debreczin, Szeged, etc., of which we shall have to speak hereafter. To sum up the characteristics of each of my divisions in a few words, I may say that the Innere Stadt is marked by irregular middle-sized houses and small streets, the Leopoldstadt by large houses and fairly proportioned streets, the *paraszt város* by small houses, and streets for the most part disproportionately wide. But the most careless *flâneur* through Pest must observe the striking inequality of size which so often prevails between contiguous houses. In the heart of the town close to the bridge, and throughout the greater part of the Leopoldstadt, a certain degree of uniformity is maintained. At any rate no building there falls below a certain standard of excellence. Beyond these limits he cannot go far without finding large, well-built, showy edifices towering out of the midst of low, mean hovels. Along the lower part of the quay the better sort of houses are studded either singly or in small groups at irregular intervals along a row of anything but respectable dwellings. All this, however, is being rapidly changed while I write. The great increase of business since the reconciliation between the sovereign and the nation in 1867 has caused a great demand for house-room. Small old houses are being now pulled down, to be replaced by large buildings, three, four, or five stories high. The court

of the Emperor-King resides in Buda from time to time. The Hungarian ministers and their subordinates require extensive accommodation, and the administrations of the Hungarian railway companies have transferred themselves from the Austrian to the Hungarian capital.

The connection between the sister-cities does not depend entirely upon the suspension-bridge. Besides small ferry-boats stationed at various points, there run in summer very good steamers, which describe a zigzag course from one side of the river to the other, thus connecting the lower end of Pest with the upper end of Buda, the suburb called Old Buda (*Ó Buda* or *Alt Ofen*). Nor are the existing means of communication sufficient. It is proposed to connect the railway terminuses of Pest and Buda by tramways and a steam ferry-boat, and also to build a second bridge over the river, with which is to be combined a railway bridge. All the Hungarian railways will thus be connected with one another.

Old Buda has, in addition to the business attractions of the docks and boat-building yards of the "Danube Steam Navigation Company," the more generally appreciated one known as the *Kaiser-Bad*. Old Buda existed in the time of the Romans under the name of *Aquincum*. It is supposed that this name, like that of *ofen* (stove), was derived from the hot sulphureous springs in the neighbourhood. That

these springs were made use of by the Romans is an opinion commonly entertained by Hungarian archeologists. In later times they passed into the hands of that equally bath-loving people, the Turks. At the present day natural hot and vapour baths are studded along the bank of the Danube in Ofen, which has thus the advantage of being not merely part of the capital of the country, but also one of its watering-places. The water of some of these springs is also drunk very largely, being recommended by the faculty in cases of diseases of the liver. But of all these establishments none is so popular as the *Kaiserbad*. It contains a restaurant, a café, suites of apartments, hot, cold, and vapour-baths, together with two large swimming-baths, one reserved for ladies. As in France and Germany, so here—the fair sex learn to swim to a much greater extent than in England. Balls are also given here in summer.

In the immediate vicinity of the Kaiserbad stands a small octagonal building covered by a circular dome. In spite of its extreme architectural plainness, it is interesting as the tomb of a Mohammedan saint, Gul Baba by name—the nearest to London of all the holy places of Islam. Its preservation was prescribed by a special article of the treaty of Karlovitz in 1699. Year by year in the month of May two dervishes come on a pilgrimage to this spot. In 1862 I heard of them passing through Eger (Erlau), and in 1864

I saw another pair of them wandering through the county of Nógrád, which seems to show that either through ignorance or from choice they do not return by the shortest way home. Hungarian charity and Hungarian hospitality are extended even to these poor despised misbelievers. Although the very antipodes of English tourists as far as a regard for the comforts and conveniences of life is concerned, these pilgrims resemble them in the daring way in which they venture into a foreign country without the slightest knowledge of its language. At a country-house where they had received lodgings for the night in the corridor, I found that they had tried, with but indifferent success, to express their wants and their thanks in a medley of Servian, Italian, Hungarian, English, and Turkish, our own affirmative particle "yes" playing a principal part in every broken sentence. Probably they cherished a vain theory that all the infidel tribes of Frangistan spoke or ought to speak the same dialect.

With respect to that most celebrated "lion" of Pest, the suspension-bridge, I feel that it is superfluous for me to go into details. Are they not all written in Murray's *Handbook for Southern Germany?* Most English visitors will understand and appreciate it as much as, if not more than, I do. Whenever I crossed it I felt as if I was for the time treading English soil. Even if the thought had not spontaneously arisen in

my mind, my Hungarian friends would have suggested it to me. The very peasantry of the surrounding villages speak with a sort of wondering admiration of the "*angolok*" who built the great bridge, and attribute our mechanical skill to our living in the midst of the waters. "We, who live here in this dry land, know nothing of such things." In whichever direction the foot-passenger may be passing, he sees a large granite slab, on which a gilt inscription in the Hungarian language records the names of the two Clarkes who respectively designed and completed the work.

But at no time does the bridge appear so grand as when the ice on the Danube breaks up. Although so much of the country through which that river flows is a flat plain, it retains in a great degree the character of a mountain stream. It rushes along with a wayward irregular current, spreading over a much larger bed than it can cover to any great depth. Hence its course is continually blocked up by islands. The escape of the waters is further impeded by the natural dam, known as the "Iron Gates," just at the point where it bursts through a gorge in the Southern Carpathians out of Lowet Hungary into the Turkish Empire. All these causes combined render the breaking up of the winter ice a matter of great interest to the inhabitants of the Hungarian capital, for, should the thaw commence higher up the stream while below

all remains firmly frozen, they are in no small danger of an inundation. Hence the crowds which watch the first symptoms of a break-up of the frost. Without feeling so personal an interest in the event, I used to go and watch its progress on account of the picturesque effects it produced. As I stood on the middle of the bridge, and saw great floes of ice drifting right against the sharp angles of its piers, and forthwith parting asunder with a loud crash, it seemed as if I was on the deck of some ship caught in an arctic sea, and cutting with pointed prow its path through the icefield.

The bed of the Danube at this point slopes toward Buda, being on the Buda side very deep, and on the Pest side comparatively shallow. Between my second and third visits to the country, this circumstance was taken advantage of to build a new wharf in the very bed of the stream, the former landing-places not being considered commensurate with the increasing commerce of the place. As Buda is not protected by a quay, as is the case with Pest, this narrowing of the river's course must place the wretched tenements of the Wasserstadt in considerable danger.

The large open space at the Pest end of the bridge was known as the *Széchenyi Platz*. The authorities long tried to change its name to *Franz Joseph Platz*, which official appellation has come

more into popular use since the coronation. In the middle of this square was raised a mound of earth contributed by the several municipalities of the country, upon which, in conformity with ancient usage, the present sovereign, wearing the Holy Crown and the other coronational insignia, and mounted on horseback, brandished a sword to the four quarters of the compass. The square has of late years been much improved by the addition to its fine large houses of the so-called Palace of the Hungarian Academy, built by subscriptions collected from village to village and from hamlet to hamlet. It was, perhaps, not pure love of science that urged the Hungarians to contribute so large a sum of money; they were further stimulated by the desire of making a demonstration against the Government of the Herr von Schmerling. In the same block with the Palace of the Academy are the magnificent offices of the "Imperial Royal Privileged Danube Steam Navigation Company."

The good people of Pest fully understand the advantage of presenting their best side to the view of the world. As a national proverb truly observes, "*Sallangos a magyar*," "the Hungarian is fond of trappings." Hence the new Redoute or Assembly Rooms, built by the municipality, is placed in a prominent position on the quay, so as to arrest the attention of all who pass along the "silent highway" of the

Danube. When, in 1864, I objected that the Town Council might as well have first spent their money on some work of more practical utility, as, for instance, on the waterworks or the drainage of the place, I was told: "Ah! but you see this building has, besides its primary and ostensible use, a political importance. It will be a convenient place of meeting for the next Diet, and thus deprive the Government of all excuse for calling it to Buda or Presburg." Yet when after all in 1865 the Diet was at length convoked, the Redoute Gebäude was not considered suitable, but a building had to be improvised in hot haste for the occasion. Such a plea would sound strange either in England or France, but in Hungary, and, as we shall see, in Transylvania, a fixed capital was not an indigenous institution. Throughout the Middle Ages Esztergam (or Gran) and Székes-Féhérvár (or Stuhlweissenburg) seem to have been the cities which the Hungarian kings chiefly delighted to honour. Buda was, however, even then an important town, and the place where the Diet generally met. After all these three royal cities had fallen into the hands of the Turks, that assembly was convened at Pozsony (or Presburg), and there have been crowned all the kings of Hungary of the Habsburg line, with the exception of Ferdinand I. and the present sovereign Francis Joseph I. Indeed, the idea that Pest is or ought to be the recognized permanent capital of the

kingdom, is of quite late date, and has its origin in the complicated political movement which renders the recent history of Hungary so interesting.

This is the reason why Pest, although one of the most German cities in the country, if account be taken of the nationality of its inhabitants, is, as far as politics go, intensely Hungarian. To whatever extent the independence of Hungary from Austria is secured, to the same extent are improved the prospects of Pest as a commercial and social rival of Vienna. The citizens of Pest, even when they have German names, and speak Hungarian badly or not at all, claim to be reckoned as Hungarians in a sense which they hold not to apply to Buda. The latter place they call a German town. Yet Pest owes its origin to the German colonists planted there by Saint Stephen and his queen, the Bavarian princess, Gisela. Its population in the Middle Ages was so exclusively German, that in the first half of the thirteenth century it could be described as "*magna et ditissima Teutonica villa.*" It is true that the old mediæval colony melted away in the Turkish wars, but of the present population fully one half, if not two thirds, must be unequivocally German, the remaining third being made up of Hungarians, Servians, and Slovacks. The Germans of Pest, especially such as belong to the well-to-do classes, make great efforts to "*magyarize*" themselves, or at any rate their children, but their efforts have

been up to a very recent period counterbalanced by the continual stream of new immigrants pouring in from Bohemia, Austria, Würtemberg, and other parts of Germany. Whenever I returned to the capital after staying any time in the provinces, my ears felt quite an unwonted sensation from hearing so much German spoken in the streets. As, however, the population of the rural districts of Hungary is every day increasing, there is now a considerable immigration of Hungarians. Domestic servants, especially women servants, are generally Magyars. The German and Jewish *bourgeoisie* prefer them with a view to the more rapid magyarization of their children. The ridiculous and exaggerated statements about the badness of Hungarian servants, inserted in travellers' handbooks, are certainly by this time obsolete.

Of the churches I cannot say more than that they are neither old, nor handsome, nor many in number. Some persons may prefer to any of them the new synagogue, built on much the same plan as the one at Cologne. As for theatres, the fact that two languages are at home in Buda-Pest necessitates a double set of them. Each of the sister-cities supports an establishment for Hungarian, and another for German dramas. In each language those of Pest are preferable. The Hungarian theatre of the latter town is known by the title of "National," and was, during the period of passive resistance, almost

elevated to the rank of a political institution. To contribute to its support and attend its performances was, in the eyes of many patriots, especially among the rich and the young, one of the most sacred duties which they owed to their country. Bureaucratic persecution, sometimes terrible, sometimes petty, made patriotism a sort of religion, which had, like the rest, its canonized martyrs, its confessors, its bigots, its hypocrites, its formalists, and its dilettanti. For the latter class the National Theatre supplied a mode of demonstrating their attachment to the fatherland, as easy to carry out as those offered by the national peculiarities of cookery and costume.

The building was erected in 1834. Another institution, owing its origin to the same desire to render the civilization of Hungary as complete and self-sufficing as possible, is the National Museum. It will well repay a careful inspection of its varied contents. There is a picture-gallery, chiefly interesting as containing a large proportion of the works of the native Hungarian school. Painting, however, like the other fine arts, counts in Hungary but few followers and few patrons. Most of the subjects are taken either from modern peasant life or from the past history of the country. There are also several Italian landscapes by a family of Hungarian artists, the Márkos, father and sons. The antiquarian department contains many remains of the ancient

Dacians, and of the præhistoric period — bronze swords, celts, &c.—and also of the Roman period, including, strangely enough, a great quantity of Egyptian pottery, showing the close connection once subsisting between the provinces of Dacia and the East. Many of the bas-reliefs found in various parts of the country and here preserved, have reference to the worship of Mithra. After these follow a long series of mediæval and modern armour, weapons, jewellery, coins, medals, &c., reaching down to our own times. Many of these objects are the more interesting from having belonged to persons who figure conspicuously in Hungarian history. Nor in Hungarian history alone. An Englishman's attention is always directed to a stick, preserved under a glass case. It was cut by Nelson, after the battle of Aboukir. He was one day walking in Vienna with Count Széchenyi, when he expressed his admiration of the cane which the Count carried in his hand. The story, I may observe *par parenthèse*, was first told me by a Franciscan. As at that time I could not speak Hungarian, and the worthy friar either could not or would not speak German, our conversation was carried on in Latin. He continued: "'*Cambiemus*,' *dixit Széchenyi Nelsono*." Nelson agreed to the exchange. The relic of the hero passed from one Hungarian magnate to another, till it found its present resting-place.

From the natural history collection the visitor, especially the scientific visitor, may learn how extremely rich Hungary is in all sorts of natural productions, especially in minerals. Its fossil and present fauna and flora are here extensively represented, and quite justify Professor Ansted's plea for a nearer acquaintance with them on the part of English naturalists.

Many ladies in Pest complained to me that it did not contain enough of pleasant promenades within a sufficiently easy distance. This struck me as rather unreasonable. It was, at any rate, a sign both of their taste for being in the open air during the summer and of their disinclination to taking walking exercise. I think that Englishwomen in many of our larger provincial towns equal in size to Buda-Pest would be glad if their advantages in this respect were only equal to those of the Hungarian capital. There are two or three open squares which serve as pleasant promenades during spring afternoons and summer evenings. They are provided with what are called kiosks, that is to say, summer cafés, where a great deal of iced coffee and ices are consumed to the sound of excellent military bands. Then there is a small park, with ornamental water, just on the outskirts of the town called the *Stadtwäldchen.* In order that the promenaders should not fatigue themselves before they get there, omnibuses run to the

park along most of the principal streets. These so-called omnibuses, however, bear no resemblance in appearance or accommodation to the stuffy jolting vehicles which bear the same name in London. They are in fact double-bodied open caleches, in which one can sit as comfortably and breathe as freely as in one's own carriage, even if one does not feel as proud or get along quite as fast. Should, however, the pleasure-seeker wish to take the air in a less public resort, and does not mind going a little further for it, there is the wooded *Margarethen-Insel*, famous during the session of the Diet in 1861 for picnics and *al fresco* balls. On the first of May it is a point of honour with all the good citizens of Pest to go out into the country—or, to use their own expression, "into the green"—for the day. The Stadtwäldchen begins to fill about five o'clock in the morning, and, if the weather is fine, there is such a crowd in all the principal walks that one can hardly move along, much less hope to get hold of a seat.

But be the drawbacks of Pest as a place of residence what they may, its increasing prosperity as a large commercial emporium and the capital of an extensive, though as yet undeveloped, territory will tend gradually to remove them. Since I left Hungary several important improvements have been carried out and others taken in hand. Pest certainly has to contend with certain natural disadvantages.

A large portion of the town lies very low and consequently the drainage is difficult, nor have sufficient efforts been made to overcome the difficulty. The natural supply of water is bad; but that will be remedied by the waterworks at present in course of construction. Lastly, the proximity of a vast sandy plain unprotected by trees, and exposed to the intense heat of a Hungarian summer and the fury of the winds, often loads the atmosphere with clouds of dust. All these disadvantages combine to render the rate of mortality in Pest disgracefully high. The citizens are, however, fully aware of these evils, and now that they have the administration of their own affairs in their own hands, it is to be hoped that they will be soon remedied. My Hungarian friends tell me that since I left the country in 1867 the town is so much altered as to be scarcely recognizable.

CHAPTER III.

OUTLINES OF HUNGARIAN HISTORY.

Aspect of the Country—Unscientific Ethnology—Exposed Position of the Country—Successive Layers of Turanian Population—Conversion of the Magyars—The Cumans and the Mongols—Turkish Occupation of Hungary—Zrinyi's Apologue—Justified by Events—Patriotic Sentimentality—Progress of the Austrian Connection—Negative Character of Hungarian History—Effects of Turkish Occupation—Fate of Bohemia—Hungarian Constitutionalism—Its Defects—Opposition to the Austrian Constitution—*Bulla Aurea*—"Nobles"—Freedom from Taxation—Extenuating Circumstances—Constitutional Reform—Unfavourable Geographical Position of Hungary—Persecution of Protestantism by the Habsburgs—Magyars and Wallachs compared—Causes of Inferiority of Eastern Europe—Hungary and Poland—Advantages of the Habsburg Connection.

To an attentive traveller Hungary presents an appearance corresponding exactly to that which its history would lead us to expect—that of a country in which civilization has continually sprouted up, and has been as often and as pertinaciously mown down. The traces which centuries of war have left upon the greater part of Hungary do not consist, as in some other European countries, in an abundance of

mediæval castles, and modern fortresses. We are rather reminded of those troublous times by the utter absence of everything old, by the meagreness of fixed property. Everything and everybody seem newly established, as if the population were ready, on the return of war, to abandon their farmyards, their huge hayricks, and abundant cornstacks, to take refuge in the cities, in the depths of the deserts of the plain, in the swamps by the sides of the great rivers, or in the mountain-forests of the north; as, in fact, they did during the repeated invasions of the Turks.

Many of those who have written about Hungary have an unscientific way of falling back upon ethnology to explain anything which they think noteworthy. If, instead of crying out with Mr. Paton, "These men are Scythians, and Scythians have never done anything but destroy," they had studied with minds unprejudiced by political or ethnological theories the past history, and the physical geography of the country, they would have seen the natural and necessary dependence of the history on the geography, and that the present condition of the people is the product of those two causes. Many English writers are fond of explaining our liberty, wealth, &c. by a reference to our Anglo-Saxon race, yet who can say with certainty what proportion of our people really come of that stock? or who can deny the influence

which our most advantageous geographical position has exercised over our destinies?*

A large portion of Hungary consists of a fertile exposed plain. This plain was, from its great extent, difficult to defend; but this difficulty has been increased by the circumstance that, in historical times, one homogeneous people never occupied the plain together with its natural fortifications, the whole semicircular range of the Carpathians, from Presburg to Orsova. At the present time, Hungarians (Magyars) occupy the plain, Slavonic tribes the Northern Carpathians, and Wallachs, or Daco-Romans, the eastern.

It will be seen that *Magyarország*, "the realm of the Hungarian,"† was a prize at once greatly to be coveted, and hardly to be retained. The very aspect of the country continually reminded me of the vivid picture which Homer gives us of the unsettled condition of heroic Hellas, when he says of Zethus and Amphion :—

> *οἳ πρῶτοι Θήβης ἕδος ἔκτισαν ἑπταπύλοιο*
> *πύργωσάν τ', ἐπεὶ οὐ μὲν ἀπύργωτόν γ' ἐδύναντο*
> *ναιέμεν εὐρύχορον Θήβην κρατερώ περ ἐόντε.*‡

The Hungarians have attempted, with but indifferent

* "The accident of geographical position has often worked mighty results in our favour, and against the Hungarians."—PAGET'S *Hungary and Transylvania*, vol. i. p. 401.

† Commonly rendered "Hungarian Land;" but compare the clause in the Lord's Prayer, *jöjjön a Te országod*, "Thy kingdom come."

‡ *Od.* XI. 263-265.

success, the very task which those heroes wisely judged beyond their power.

The flat country about the Danube and the Theiss has been called the European Pampas. It is a reproduction, on a smaller scale, within the circle of the Carpathians, of those vast steppes which stretch through Poland and Russia far away into Northern Asia, and seems to have exercised a peculiar attraction over the nomad tribes of those steppes. There is good reason for believing that even in the days of Herodotus it was occupied by hordes of Finnish or Turkish blood, and that the Jazyges Metanastæ defeated by the Romans under Constantine (359) belonged to one or other of these races.* Here the Huns and their leader, the terrible "Scourge of God," fixed their head-quarters (376-433). Hither came the kindred race of the Avars; and when these, too, had melted away in the midst of the hostile Germans and Slavs, a third wave of the same race poured in the tenth century through the passes of the Carpathians, and again claimed the valley of the Danube as a portion of the heritage of the Turanian family. These were the people called in their own tongue *Mogurs*, or *Magyars*, to whom the Byzantine writers give the name of *Turks*, but the Latins that

* See R. G. LATHAM'S *Native Races of the Russian Empire*, pp. 212, 213, and the articles *Jazyges*, and *Sarmatia*, in SMITH'S *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography*, vol. ii. pp. 7, 8, 918.

of *Hungari*. Scarcely less terrible than the horde of Attila, their light cavalry wasted Europe from Constantinople to Arles, from the frontiers of Denmark to the valleys of the Abruzzi. The popular superstition of that day recognized in these pitiless heathen the Gog and Magog who were to precede the approaching end of the world.*

It might be supposed that this third horde would suffer the same fate as its two predecessors, and that these cruel enemies of Christianity and civilization would atone for their ravages only by their destruction. It was not so to be. The descendants of Árpád, the heathen conqueror of Pannonia, were transformed by Pope Sylvester into apostolic kings. The wild pastoral horde became a settled agricultural people, and their arms and valour, no longer employed in the devastation of Aryan Christendom, became its surest bulwark against other Turanian tribes still pressing on from the east—against the Cumans, the Mongols, and the Ottomans.

The Cumans, who seem to have been very nearly allied to the Magyars, never succeeded in doing more than making continual and harassing incursions into the country. These came to an end about the year 1239, when 40,000 families fled from Cumania, the present Moldavia, and were received as guests by

* A brilliant sketch of their devastations is given by Gibbon in the fifty-fifth chapter of his history.

Béla IV., King of Hungary. The cause of this migration was the terror inspired by the approach of the Mongols. Their horde, estimated at half a million of men, under the leadership of Khan Batu, poured into Hungary by the route formerly taken by the Magyars themselves. King Béla suffered on the banks of the Sajó near Miskolcz such a defeat as has seldom befallen any Christian people, and saved his own life with difficulty by taking refuge in an island off the coast of Dalmatia. The barbarians returned home in 1242, but, if we are to believe the *Carmen Miserabile* of Rogerius and other contemporary authorities, Hungary was already a desert.

Terrible as this visitation was, its effects were perhaps not so permanently disastrous as the longer occupation of a large part of the country by the Ottoman Turks. It was to rid themselves of these last and worst children of the East, that the Hungarians chose the German Emperor to be their king. The aid which he afforded them was neither so prompt nor so effectual as they had hoped. Indeed, the researches of recent Hungarian historians have shown that even the wish to expel the Turks was often wanting to the Emperor's councillors. They regarded the Turks as their fellow-labourers in the work of breaking down the attachment of the stubborn Magyars to their inherited constitutional liberties. For a century and a half a Turkish Pasha ruled in

Buda. During this long period so intolerable were the exactions of the ill-paid and licentious German mercenaries, and the persistent persecution of the Protestant religion, which one half at least of the Magyars had embraced, that many Hungarians doubted whether the rule of a Catholic Kaiser was preferable to that of a Mohammedan Sultan. What they thought of the alternative presented to them may be learned from the terrible apologue of one of the Zrinyi family, pleading in favour of the former. "A man once saw his friend being carried bodily by the devil into hell. He commiserated him as one whose condition was already so bad, that it admitted of no possible aggravation. 'Do not say so, my friend,' expostulated the sufferer; 'how then would it be with me, if the devil were to set me down, and, mounting on my shoulders, were to make me carry him into that place of torments?' My fellow-countrymen, the German is the fiend who carries us to our ruin, but the Turk is the fiend who must be carried."

And Zrinyi was right. However oppressive the rule of the Habsburgs may have appeared to those who loved civil and religious liberty, they did not burn down whole cities nor depopulate whole counties. A large Turkish army attended at the election of a Prince of Transylvania. The candidate favoured by the Sublime Porte was elected, and the Turks

returned home, dragging along with them 80,000 captives. What then would they have done if the election had fallen out contrary to their wishes? Who after this can be surprised when he learns that on the expulsion of these ferocious Orientals the southern counties of Hungary, forming the so-called Banat, were left literally a desert, and had to be peopled by colonists from all quarters—from Bulgaria, Servia, Germany, nay, even Italy and France?

Characteristically enough, in the midst of all these troubles the Hungarians still clung to the theory that *de jure* the Hungarian kingdom was one and indivisible. The Habsburg King had to swear at his coronation that he would restore the ancient boundaries of the land. The Pashas of Buda and Temesvár, with their subordinate pashas and agas, were regarded as passing strangers. The separation of Transylvania from Hungary, and its submission to the suzerainty of the Sublime Porte, were regarded as merely temporary arrangements required for the time by certain Hungarian interests and necessities which could not permanently impair the integrity of the realm of St. Stephen. Indeed, as far as concerns the political organization of the territory the Ottomans occupied for a century and a half, it is remarkable how little permanent effect they left behind them.

With regard to the relations, whether of war or alliance, between the Hungarians and the Ottomans,

a great deal of sentimental nonsense has been written both by the Hungarians themselves, and their enemies, the Viennese Centralists. On the part of both of them, their passions being inflamed by patriotism and their reason obscured by real or supposed self-interest, such outbursts may perhaps be excused. But it is not a little ridiculous to find them echoed by Englishmen or Frenchmen who affect a philosophic impartiality. The Hungarians, like the Poles, boast that they were the bulwark that protected Europe against Oriental tyranny and barbarism, and contend that Europe now owes them a debt of gratitude for the services rendered by their forefathers. But surely neither the Poles nor the Hungarians fought against the Ottomans from any such exalted motives as a desire of defending Christendom in general, but rather in defence of their own particular fatherlands. This is more especially evident in the case of the Hungarian nation, of which a large portion actually allied themselves with the Turks, and acknowledged the suzerainty of the Sultan. For this they have been several times rated by the Viennese, in a strain of high moral indignation, as traitors who conspired with the "hereditary enemies of all Christendom" against the superior civilization of Germany —the Germany, be it observed, of Tilly, Wallenstein, and Ferdinand II. "Was ever such antichristian conduct heard of?" they exclaim, as if both France

and England had not often done the same. Before John Zápolya became the liegeman of Solyman the Magnificent, the "Most Christian King," Francis I., had become his ally. In exactly the same spirit of self-flattering sentimentality which the Hungarians exhibit when they claim the gratitude of Christendom for having kept the Turks out of Germany, the Austrian Germans claim the gratitude of the Magyars for having driven those same infidels out of Hungary. "But for him," says Mr. Boner, of the Austrian German, "Hungary to-day were under a Turkish hospodar."* Yet in this case, too, it was selfish, or, at the best, patriotic, care of their own country that led them to make that effort. During the reigns of Matthias Corvinus and his predecessors, the Archdukes of Austria were, in fact, the most effectual allies of the Ottomans against Hungary.

At the same time the Turkish invasion and occupation of the country brought about the close union which subsisted for three centuries between Hungary and the adjacent provinces of the German Empire, and changed the government of the former country from an elective monarchy to one, at first virtually, and at last avowedly, hereditary. If the Turk was to be resisted, the German must be conciliated, must be converted into an ally. Thus, after the battle of

* *Transylvania*, p. 566.

Mohács (1526), it came to be tacitly recognized that the prince who was at once Emperor of Germany, King of Bohemia, and Archduke of Austria, must also be elected King of Hungary. When Leopold I. expelled the Turks from that country, the Hungarian Estates, partly from fear, partly from gratitude, partly from policy, declared (1687) the crown hereditary among his male descendants. But as Leopold's sons, Joseph I. and Charles III.* had no male offspring, the latter, in 1722, caused all the several states which formed his dominions to accept the so-called Pragmatic Sanction, which guaranteed the succession to female heirs. By this Pragmatic Sanction, the identity of the Sovereign of Hungary, Bohemia, and Austria was secured until the extinction of all the descendants by the male or female line of Leopold I. —at the present day a very unlikely event. Thus was established the peculiar connection between Hungary on the one part and the so-called Hereditary States † on the other, which has been represented by the one side as a mere "personal union," by the other side as a "real union," being actually a *tertium quid*

* Charles VI. of Germany.

† The dominions of the House of Austria have always been in want of an accurate collective appellation. Many English readers suppose the expression "Hereditary States" to apply to its non-Hungarian, in contradistinction to its Hungarian, provinces. Originally, however, it was used to designate the hereditary German fiefs of Upper and Lower Austria, Tyrol, Styria, &c., in contradistinction to the elective Holy Roman Empire, of which they formed part.

—something closer than the first, and not so close as the last.

Hungarians themselves say, "It is difficult for you Englishmen, favoured as you are by Providence, to understand mere negative greatness. We are proud of our past history, not so much as a record of glorious deeds, but because it shows through what fiery trials we have passed without being either annihilated or demoralized." If the Magyars considered themselves nobles—if this opinion of themselves produced many faults of character, especially with regard to their conduct towards other nations—it must, on the other hand, be admitted that they felt the force of the principle *noblesse oblige*. Whatever evils fell upon the Hungarian nation, fell with peculiar severity upon the Hungarian nationality. When the Ottoman armies entered Transylvania, the Wallachs fled to the mountains, the Saxons barred fast their fenced cities, while the Hungarians fell in hecatombs on the open field, dying, sword in hand, for the common country.

These Turkish wars are the key to much of the recent history of Hungary. They prolonged what may be called its mediæval period down to the beginning of the eighteenth century. They threw the country so far behind the rest of Europe in respect of material improvement, that it has not yet recovered the lost ground. They produced a feeling of insecurity, which is one of the worst retarders of

civilization. They familiarized the people with all the sanguinary scenes of war, conducted with Asiatic recklessness and cruelty; and they, besides, afforded opportunities for indulging in the worst of all wars—civil wars of religion. But their effects were not wholly evil. If they prevented Hungary from attaining the same material elevation as Bohemia, they prevented the former kingdom from sinking into the same political depression and apathy as the latter. Every student of European history knows that, as the forerunner of the Reformation, Bohemia was the rival of England. In few countries did the doctrines of Luther and Calvin find so favourable a soil, or develop themselves so rapidly, in spite of the opposition of the government, as in Bohemia. She went so far as to set aside her hereditary sovereign and elect a Protestant stranger for her king. But in the battle of the White Mountain (1620) she lost everything,—her constitution, her nationality, her religion. According to some historians two-thirds of the population disappeared. Of those who were left the great nobles became courtiers, the people slaves, and both Catholics. The remnant who still clung to their persecuted faith had to send abroad their theological students into Germany and Hungary. The majority became the instruments for carrying out against others that system of absolutism and bureaucracy, of which their own country had been the most notable victim.

Shrewd, thrifty, industrious, pliant, they became the most successful manufacturers, the most bigoted protectionists, and the supplest government officials in the whole conglomeration of states called the Austrian Empire. Such a fate Hungary fortunately or unfortunately escaped. Many of us now-a-days will, perhaps, think the lot of Bohemia preferable. They consider that the solid advantages of material civilization and material wealth more than compensate for the ideal blessings of political and religious liberty. Whether they are right or not in that estimate, it must be allowed, as I have often heard it allowed both by Bohemians and Germans, that the peculiar position of Hungary, her noble championship of something—which, with all its faults, was always irreconcilable with the crippling stillness of absolutism — has had a most beneficial effect upon the common government, and has played a most important part in creating the present constitutionalism of Austria. The good which Providence brought out of that apparently unmixed evil — the Turkish supremacy in Hungary — was the preservation of Hungarian Protestantism and of the old Hungarian constitution, the little leaven which has since leavened the whole lump.

If I appear as the apologist of that old Hungarian constitution, it is not because I am blind to its manifold defects. But I think that those defects lay so

open to the view of the whole world, they were such glaring anomalies, they were such downright contradictions of the modern theories of the rights of man, and the principles of '89, that many persons do not examine the question so far as to see that it really contained within itself the means of practically removing those defects. That old aristocratical constitution has been formally abolished, and the most ultra-conservative *laudator temporis acti* does not propose its re-establishment. Nevertheless, so many traces of it still remain that, without some knowledge of it, present Hungarian politics would be at best but imperfectly intelligible. Reserving a fuller account of it to a subsequent chapter, I would in the present one allude to its most characteristic features.

That old constitution was no sooner reformed by liberal patriots in 1848, than both old abuses and new reforms were alike swept away by the triumph of the combined Austrian and Russian armies in 1849. The absolute government, carried out by foreign bureaucrats, which was the result of their triumph, was so distasteful to the whole nation, that when I first visited Hungary (1862) all men seemed to act on the maxim, *De mortuis nil nisi bonum.* In fact they held the same enthusiastic, indeed deceptive, language which the American traveller, Mr. Brace, heard eleven years before. The

Jew, the peasant, the shopkeeper, then talked of the lost privileges of the aristocracy in such a way as to lead any one who listened to them to suppose that these were the privileged classes, or that they had lived in a state of perfect social equality instead of having been deprived by that constitution of political rights, and in some cases of important social ones. They were equally unanimous, and equally determined in their rejection of the common constitution for the whole Austrian Empire, which had been proffered for their acceptance in the preceding year. Several Englishmen who wrote at that time on the subject, counselled them to accept the free gift of a high-spirited sovereign, and denounced the obstinacy of the Hungarians as unreasonable and suicidal.

The arguments with which the Hungarians justified their continued resistance to the Viennese Government were, shortly, as follows: "The Austrian constitution," said they, "based on the Diploma of the 20th October, 1860, and the Patent of February 26th, 1861, is avowedly an experiment. It rests on no other historical or legal basis than the free gift of an absolute sovereign. Should this experiment fail in benefiting the State, that sovereign will have the moral right, as he always, through his uncontrolled command of an enormous army, has the physical force to abrogate it. Our constitution, on the contrary, was in the most distinct terms based upon

a compact between the reigning house and the sovereign people, and this constitution we must have unreservedly restored." Events soon proved that the Hungarians' opinion of the weakness of the Austrian Constitution was well founded. In 1865 the continued resistance of the Hungarians, and the threatening attitude assumed by Prussia, had rendered Herr von Schmerling's position untenable. New negotiations were entered into with the Hungarians, for which a clear field was provided by the suspension of the Austrian Constitution. This suspension lasted until 1867, when the reconciliation between Hungary and the other half of the empire was effected. The Austrian Constitution based on the Patent of February 1861, was restricted in its operation to the Cisleithanian half of the empire, and the Hungarians obtained a recognition of their independence and a national ministry.

As mentioned above, the time-honoured constitution of Hungary was based on a compact made, not once, or in pre-historic times, but often solemnly renewed between the sovereign people and the candidate for royalty. They gave up a certain portion of the powers naturally inherent in themselves, but with the express stipulation, which the King on his part engaged himself by oath to observe, that all other rights, powers, and privileges, were to be left undisturbed and undiminished. The King, who did not

keep his plighted faith, might be compelled to do so by a legalized rebellion. This state of things was in the Middle Ages declared as explicitly, or, if the reader prefers the expression, as insolently, as in the famous Arragonese formula "*et si non non.*" In the very beginning of the Hungarian State, when the seven chiefs of the tribes swore allegiance to Árpád as their sovereign, and to his descendants after him, they declared that if either he or any of his successors broke the terms of that treaty between them, *anathemati subjaceat in perpetuum.* So again, when King Andrew II.* granted in 1222 the *Bulla Aurea*, commonly called the *Magna Charta* of Hungary, and like that famous instrument extorted from an incapable ruler by an armed force, he had to declare that if ever he or any of his successors infringed the privileges granted in that charter, it would be allowable for any of the freemen of the realm, either in a body or individually, to take up arms, and enforce redress, without thereby incurring the taint of treason. This provision as savouring too strongly of mediæval disorder, was abrogated by the Diet of 1687, "not from any objection to its true sense, but lest evil-disposed persons by a false interpretation should make a wrong use of it." But although this clause was omitted, the coronation oath, and the inaugural

* Surnamed the Hierosolymite, the only King of Hungary who ever went on a Crusade. He took part in the Fifth Crusade in 1217.

diploma, which every king had to publish before the ceremony of being crowned, expressed with sufficient clearness the theory that his right to reign was derived from a covenant made between his predecessors and the Hungarian people.

The weak point of this constitution was contained in its definition of the word "Hungarian people," and unsparingly have the enemies of Hungary exposed and exaggerated this weak point. The peculiar language of the Hungarian law-books has given colour to such misrepresentations. When the Magyars conquered Pannonia, they came under the influence of what it is now the fashion to call "Latin Christianity." This of course brought Latin into use, not only as the language of theology, but also of diplomacy, history, and law. From that language the Hungarians took two words which most correctly described the difference recognized by their constitution between the man possessed of full and complete citizenship, and the rest who, though subjects of the State, had not the full franchise of the republic. These two words were "populus" and "plebs." The "populus" in the Hungarian—as in the primitive Roman—commonwealth was composed of all the freemen, who were indeed the State, by whose suffrages, and for whose benefit the laws were made. On the other hand the "plebs" was made up of all those who, though destitute of the hereditary legislative franchise,

were nevertheless recognized as belonging to the State, and were under the protection of its laws. This parallel will appear somewhat more exact when I add that the origin of the Hungarian "plebs" is enveloped in almost as much mystery as that of the Roman. Now a member of the "populus" was called in Hungarian *nemes ember*, which they translated into Latin by the word "*nobilis*." It requires but a very superficial acquaintance with Roman history to see how inappropriate this word was, but the narrow signification attached in English to its derivative "noble" makes it quite an effort of thought for us to bear in mind the difference between our use of the word and the Hungarian. When we read in the *Tripartitum* of Verböczy*—the first great attempt at codification of common or customary law in Hungary —the words "*Nomine populi intellige dominos prælatos, barones, et alios magnates, atque quoslibet nobiles*," we instantly have before our minds the idea of a great country governed by a "Venetian oligarchy." His definition is so worded as to favour that erroneous idea. The great princes of the Church, the high functionaries of State, and the titled peers take up so much room there, that they obscure the important qualification contained in those little words *atque quoslibet nobiles*, "and whosoever may be possessed of the franchise." Latterly this class was so large

* Compiled in 1514.

as to constitute one-twentieth of all the adult males. This proportion is intelligible, when we consider that it was only in very rare and exceptional cases that a "*nemes ember*" could be degraded from his status, while many occasions served to "ennoble," *i.e.* enfranchise, the peasant. In the Turkish wars, and in the wars of religion, whole villages were ennobled *en masse*. Indeed this is the way in which the evil of aristocratic privilege generally cures itself, namely, by a process which I may perhaps be allowed to call *aristocratic adoption*. We see this process at work in the histories of the Roman Republic, and of France under the *ancien régime*. The ranks of the privileged classes are continually swollen by new recruits from the unprivileged, until their exclusive rights become such a burdensome anomaly that they are abolished altogether. Such was the case in Hungary. "We, and the Austrian Government," said a Hungarian to me, "were in 1848 alike convinced of the necessity of doing away with the inequality of rights which existed between the noble and the peasant; but we differed as to the best way of effecting that object: *we* wanted to make all nobles, *they* wanted to make all peasants."

As I remarked above, the Turkish occupation prolonged the Middle Ages in Hungary to the beginning of the eighteenth century. *Inter arma silent leges*. It is not surprising that, in those days, no

feasible schemes were elaborated for the improvement of the great mass of the people. With regard to the period which followed their expulsion, the apathy and indolence of the privileged orders can be more easily explained than excused. At the same time, it would be unjust to judge men who lived in the East of Europe during the last century with the same severity as Englishmen of the present day. If we compare the Hungarian nobility in the reign of Maria Theresa with their neighbours in Austria, Bohemia, and Poland, we shall not find them often losing by the comparison. But however that may be, it is certain that the country suffered grievously from the obstinacy with which the "nobles" clung to their freedom from direct taxation. I speak particularly of direct taxation, for of the customs they must have paid at least their share, and these the Government very skilfully contrived to levy without their consent. It is impossible to acquit them of illiberal and ungenerous conduct; but some extenuating circumstances may be pleaded on their behalf,—principally, the great suspicion which all the measures of an anti-national government naturally excited. It was a government of foreigners, and one, too, which everywhere else governed absolutely. It might, therefore, be suspected of desiring to introduce a similar absolutist administration into Hungary. This could only be done over the ruins of the aristocratic con-

stitution. Of this constitution, the immunity of the noble, that is of the freeman, from taxation was a part. When, then, a Government, suspected of a wish to subvert the whole, directed its efforts against that part, it was not unnatural that a selfish regard for their own pockets should appear to the Estates as a sacred duty to their country. Such were the nobler elements in the opposition of the Hungarian country gentlemen to the philanthropic reforms of Joseph II. Doubtless they were mixed up with selfishness and ignorance; but of what political struggle, especially in past times, cannot the same be said? In judging a nation, a class, or a party, it is not fair to take into account only the base majority, without noticing the minority of nobler spirits which are always to be found in any successful political movement.

Ultimately, the more generous and enlightened members of the very nobility that had thwarted the anti-national and absolutist philanthropy of Joseph II. applied themselves to the problem of reconciling the claims of liberty and equity. The whole history of Hungary from 1790 down to 1848 is, in fact, nothing else but the gradual solution of that problem, and their endeavours may challenge comparison with the conduct of any other aristocracy in the world placed in similar circumstances; but the solution was attained, so to say, only yesterday, and no sooner was it attained than the nation was overwhelmed by

new and unforeseen evils. Thus the civilization of this unfortunate country has had to contend against much greater difficulties than the nations of Western Europe have experienced. The period of constitutional reform, from 1823 to 1848, the period of prostration and passive resistance, from 1849 to 1867, and the ultimate elevation of the constitutional party to power will be referred to more at length in subsequent chapters.

I have been led into giving this cursory sketch of the main features of Hungarian history in great part by a desire to lead others who may travel in the country, or may otherwise have their attention directed to the subject, to the conclusions which I have myself adopted with respect to the state of civilization in Eastern Europe. All explanations professing to be based on ethnology are worse than superfluous—they are inconsistent with facts. On the other hand, geography and history explain them satisfactorily. The geographical situation of Hungary was unfavourable for mediæval commerce, and withal exposed her to be continually ravaged by the most barbarous of barbarians. Who can doubt but that, if the Danube, instead of flowing into the Black Sea, had rolled its waters through the highlands of Croatia into the Adriatic, the civilization of the great agricultural country on its banks would have been incalculably improved? Or, again, if the princes of the

house of Austria had, like the better sort of their subjects, cordially embraced the cause of the Reformation, would not all their kingdoms, and notably that of Hungary, have escaped those desolating wars which made the seventeenth century in many respects one of retrogression, rather than of progress?

It is commonly asserted by the Hungarians that an Austrian state paper of the seventeenth century lays down the following principle of policy:—"*Oportet facere Hungariam catholicam, germanam, et miseram,*"—"we must make Hungary Catholic, German, and poor."* Commenting on this sentence, the Hungarians say,—"They have never succeeded in making us Germans, they have achieved but partial success in making us Catholics, but in making us poor they have been but too successful." What progress was to be expected from a nation, placed in such a position and subject to such rules?

That the peculiarities of Hungarian civilization are not to be explained by allusions to "nomade ancestors," "the Turanian family," or "Mongolian shape of the skull," becomes evident as soon as we include in our survey the case of the Wallachs or Daco-Romans. These people are not Scythians, their language does not belong to the Turanian family, their skulls are not of the Mongolian type;

* M. de Gérando gives the words as "*Faciam Hungariam captivam, postea mendicam, deinde catholicam.*"

nevertheless, in all those points in which the Magyar is held inferior to the German, they are inferior to the Magyar. Of course there may be something mysterious in the blood which makes a Magyar brave, a German industrious, and a Wallach neither the one nor the other; but, as long as I can explain these peculiarities by reference to the past fortunes of these three races, I shall regard the ethnological explanation as plausible, perhaps, but certainly not proved.

In fact, the different degrees of civilization to which the various nations of Europe have severally attained, will be found in the main to depend on the amount of Roman civilization which the circumstances of their history have enabled them to preserve or acquire. It was chiefly because Hungary and Poland lay so far out of the track of the civilizing armies of old Rome, that they retained so much of northern barbarism in such unmitigated forms. Hence the small number and comparative weakness of their cities, and the little influence which the class of burghers has had over society and legislation in those countries. Hence the contempt so long entertained—if, indeed, it can even now be said to have disappeared—by Poles and Magyars for commerce and the arts, and, in a scarcely less degree, for philosophy and literature.

At the same time I would not be supposed to

share in the vulgar prejudice which ignores all distinctions between distant objects, and supposes the Poles and Hungarians to differ only in name. In those particulars in which Eastern Europe is inferior to Western, Poland will generally be found inferior to Hungary. This is especially the case in the development of a commercial and industrial middle class. For this two, perhaps three, causes can be assigned. First, the superior geographical position of the country. Although Hungary cannot compete with England as the home of a commercial and industrial people, having neither a favourable climate nor a convenient sea-coast, nor that alternation of hill and dale, that variety of soil and geological strata required for the combination of agriculture and manufactures, it is still superior in these respects to Poland. Secondly, lying further south it had communication not only with the more civilized portions of Germany, but also with Italy and Byzantium.

But Hungary had another advantage over Poland besides that of a more favourable geographical position. It cannot fairly be denied that the former country has derived great and solid benefits—often, it is true, disguised as curses—from its connection for three hundred years with the House of Habsburg. The possession of extra-Hungarian dominions gave the Crown sufficient power to convert an elective into an hereditary monarchy, and to curb the excessive

and licentious individualism of the nobility. The long struggle for their lives and liberties with the Turks and the Germans disciplined the Hungarians into a regular prosecution of a definite line of policy, in which prudence was dictated to them by the necessities of their position. During the few centuries which we may fairly consider modern, the Hungarians have never displayed that wanton excess of violence and corruption which disgraced the elections of so many Polish kings.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GREAT HUNGARIAN PLAIN.

Limits of the Alföld—The Principal Magyar Area—The Great and Little Plains—Dr. Ditz—Hungarian Agriculture—Its Uniform Character—Want of Wood and Stone—Bad Roads—Imperfect Drainage—Fertility of the Soil—Cultivated Deserts—Continental Climate—Want of Moisture—Canals and Plantations—Want of Fuel—Wells—Subterranean Granaries.

FROM Pest to the borders of Transylvania, from Tokay to Belgrade, stretches one vast alluvial plain, here sandy, there loamy, here dry, there marshy, but on the whole remarkably destitute of trees, and still more of stones. This plain is known as the *Alföld*, literally the "Lowland," in contradistinction to the sub-Carpathian districts in the north of Hungary, called *Felföld* or "Highland." The vast expanse of the Alföld is especially interesting to the traveller in Hungary, as it is at once the most striking and the most peculiarly Hungarian feature of the scenery and geography of that country, and is also the special habitat of the Magyar race.

Indeed, popular opinion, on the part both of foreigners and natives, is apt to exaggerate the closeness of the connection between the Magyars and the Alföld. Although most of its inhabitants are of that race, several Slovack colonies are scattered over its vast extent, and its southern portion, the so-called Banat, is inhabited by Germans and Serbs, with but few Magyars among them. On the other hand, many of the latter nationality are to be found in the hilly parts of the country, in Transylvania and west of the Danube. On the whole, however, we may accept as tolerably accurate the statement that the Alföld is the home of the Magyar.

The Danube, in its course through the Austro-Hungarian Empire, from Linz to Orsova, flows through what in some præ-historic period formed three lakes or inland seas. The first of them, in which Vienna itself is situate, is the smallest. The gorge near Theben separates the Austrian plain of the Marchfeld from the so-called Little Hungarian Plain, which extends on both sides of the Danube, and is watered on the north by the Waag and the Neutra, on the south by the Raab and the Raabnitz. It is bounded on the west by the mountains of Styria and the Little Carpathians; on the east by the wooded range of the Bakony and the volcanic hills of the county of Bars. Below the archiepiscopal city of Esztergam or Gran, these hills north and south of the Danube

approach so near as to form a picturesque gorge through which the river forces its way as far as Vácz or Waizen, where it enters on the Great Hungarian Plain of the Alföld.

These two plains differ widely in extent. The first is only 30 German miles long from north to south, and only half as broad from east to west, and contains about 300 German square miles. The Great Hungarian Plain, on the other hand, stretches from the point where the Tisza or Theiss escapes from the mountain forests of Marmaros to the hills of Slavonia, 70 German miles from north-east to south-west. Its breadth from the mountains of Transylvania on the east to the hills of Bakony and Vertes on the west is about 30 German miles, and the whole extent of the plain is at least 1,700 German square miles. It extends on both sides of the Danube, the Theiss, and the Maros. The name of the Alföld is, however, generally restricted to that portion of it which lies east of the Danube and north of the Maros.

These statistics are in themselves sufficient to explain the importance which the Alföld possesses for all who would acquire an idea of Hungarian history, agriculture, or commerce, in the past or the present. The peculiar character of this portion of the country has had a most decided effect upon the industry and domestic economy of its inhabitants. Dr. Ditz, who was sent by the Bavarian Government

to report on the production and export of Hungarian corn, has given the name "Hungarian agriculture" to the method of cultivation practised over this vast plain, and expressly desires his readers not to confuse this expression, "Hungarian agriculture," *i.e.* the agriculture peculiar to Hungary, with "agriculture of Hungary," which latter expression would include all agricultural systems prevailing over the whole country, including its mountainous regions. Dr. Ditz's book is of all that I have read on Hungary the one most marked by a spirit of fairness and impartiality. He does not fail to see and to point out the many weak points of the Magyar character, but he is, at the same time, equally forward in defending them against many false, or at any rate exaggerated, accusations. Although, as I have above observed, Dr. Ditz went to Hungary on a special mission, the peculiar character of "Hungarian agriculture" interested him so much that he determined to investigate the whole subject in all its bearings. The result is a book combining in a remarkable manner interest and instruction. He has all the accuracy without the dryness or dulness of a mere statistician. During his two years' stay in the country he acquired a knowledge of the Hungarian language, a circumstance in itself sufficient to raise him above the common level of foreign travellers in that country.

"The great Hungarian plain," he observes, "in

all its phenomena, has something which, for the most part, leaves on the stranger's mind an impression equally compounded of his own sense of discomfort, and the vastness, we may say the infinitude, of nature. What makes the Alföld so dear to the native—its immense proportions—is the very thing which oppresses us. Everywhere mass prevails; while there is too little separation into parts, too little change of form." Nothing is so striking in this district as its uniformity, which appears in the composition of the soil, the slight difference in elevation between valley and table-land, and the sameness of the climate over almost the whole of its extent. The natural consequence of this uniformity is the similarity, we had almost written monotony, of the vegetation. "On the Alföld there is but one situation, that of the whole Alföld. Scarcely any difference can be made between hill and vale, northern slope and southern, forest and steppe. The causes for the presence or absence of any one thing are pretty much the same over the whole plain; so that if we find any phenomenon—provided it be of a decidedly natural, not of an artificial character—in any one place, we may conclude with tolerable certainty that it is to be found in most places." This holds good both of the *fauna* and of the *flora* of the Alföld. The domestic animals which occur at all are spread over the whole plain; those which do not thrive in one

portion of it, will hardly in any other. Red clover and the *coniferæ* do not flourish anywhere on the Alföld; the acacia succeeds everywhere. Tobacco is at present, in consequence of the fiscal regulations of the Government, cultivated only in a few places, but it could be grown with advantage anywhere on the plain.

This uniformity of character both in scenery and agriculture has more consequences than would appear at first sight to a superficial observer. As every peculiarity, such as fertile soil, bad roads, want of water, and the vicinity of marshes, is represented on so large a scale that we may expect to find them everywhere, there is very little individuality of a permanent character in a landed estate. In the same neighbourhood one estate resembles another even in its minutest details. Both rejoice in like flatness of the fields, like soil, like climate, like want of trees, brooks and roads, like aspect and prospect. When one exchanges his estate for another, or a portion of it for another's field, no noticeable change is made in the neighbourhood. The new proprietor can, with the greatest ease and in a very short time, give his new property the same appearance as his old one had, and feel himself quite at home on it. "With us," observes Dr. Ditz—and what he says of Germany applies with at least equal force to England—"that would not be so easy, since here every field

requires to be specially studied; and on every estate the lie of the land as regards water and roads, is, in appearance at least, different to that on the neighbouring ones. Every tree reminds us of the long years through which we have been accustomed to see it in its place, and even the curves in the boundary, of which we have so often complained, will be sorely missed when our eyes can rest on them no more." On this account we find that, all other things being equal, land changes hands less often in a hilly country than in a flat one, and in a neighbourhood which has long been in a high state of cultivation, than in one into which cultivation has recently been introduced. From both these reasons, the attachment to a particular piece of land is small on the Hungarian Alföld. There a man easily makes up his mind to part with an estate which he has long possessed, and perhaps inherited from his forefathers, if he can do so with profit. "Everything which he leaves behind him in the old estate, he finds, or can soon provide, on the new one. No legacies or outlay of his ancestors lie in the soil, and their glorious deeds, and the fame of the family, supposing that he can boast of such advantages, have no connection with an estate which the glorious ancestor probably never set eyes on."

The utter absence from the Great Plain of wood, stone, and all other materials for road-making, has

conduced in no small degree to cripple its agricultural development. As the tracks which served as roads were in winter utterly impassable for even a lightly loaded cart, the villages had to provision themselves for the whole of the wet season, and the corn-grower had to make haste and sell his corn at once, unless he was prepared to keep it by him till spring. The Austrian Government did a great deal to improve the *main* roads, but there are cases in which it might have built a railroad elsewhere for the cost of getting a highway on the Alföld into merely decent condition. In some places the cost of providing gravel and stone amounted to two, or even three, hundred thousand florins per German mile. As this does not include the labour bestowed upon them, they really cost a great deal more. As Dr. Ditz well says, "The roads that were made furnished the best excuse for those that were not." How, indeed, could it be otherwise in a country where, to use a forcible Hungarian proverb, "A pebble could not be bought for money as a remedy against the toothache?"

I myself have observed, especially in the Banat, although the institution is not unknown in other portions of the Great Plain, the existence of a side-road at a lower level than the elevated *chaussée*. This side-road is not macadamized like the other, and is therefore preferred in dry weather as it does not wear out the hoofs of the horses so much. Not that in

former times at any rate, there was so much difference between them. I have often heard of a traveller (I rather think he was a German) who visited Hungary in the good old days when books of travel were still written in Latin. Complaining to his peasant-driver of the badness of the road, the latter answered: "It is true, your worship, that the road is not very good just here, but we shall presently get upon the *töltés* (dam, dyke)." What he thought of that is best expressed in his own words, "*Lutum super lutum ponunt et* töltés *vocant.*"

The same traveller noticed in the next clause another characteristic feature of Alföld scenery, adding "*et habent pontes sine aquâ.*" It is indeed more than a feature of its scenery, it is an important fact in its physical geography. I allude to the peculiar relations of the level of land and water in that district. The fall along the valley of the Theiss is only one inch in 100 fathoms; in that of the Danube throughout the greater part of its course through Lower Hungary the fall is still less. Nor is this all. There is at the same time but a very slight slope toward the beds of these two rivers. The highest point between them is only 200 feet above the level of the river's bed; the table-lands have an average height of only 60-100 feet; and a very large portion of the country enclosed is only 10-20 feet above that level. That the difference of level between hill and

vale is so very slight is a circumstance of the greatest importance for both the weal and the woe of Hungarian agriculture. The struggle between the agriculturalist and water is at the best a long and toilsome one, but it becomes nearly hopeless when the ambiguous element appears in the form of subterranean waters. The mightiest rivers may have bounds set them by dykes, and the smallest brook may be dammed up so as to be of service in the way of irrigation, but no device of man can keep down the subterranean waters when too abundant, or bring them to the surface when deficient. Now, unfortunately, water on the Alföld almost always takes a subterranean form. There is, perhaps, no European country which has so few brooks as the Hungarian lowland. The traveller passing over a distance of seventy-five English miles, finds not a single brook on his way from one navigable river to another. In seasons of drought the moisture in the land drains into the rivers—a phenomenon not peculiar to Hungary; but what is unfamiliar to us is that in wet seasons the reverse takes place, and the waters of the rivers soak through their banks into the adjacent country, reappearing perhaps at a great distance off in the form of pools or swamps, those characteristic features of Alföld scenery in the spring, haunted by the stork, so much a favourite of Hungarian poets—of Petöfi, Tompa, and others. The "*pontes sine aquâ*," which

our old traveller observed, were bridges thrown over the hollows in the way, which, although dry during the summer, are after heavy rains filled with the water which comes down from the mountains and, as it were, losing its way, wanders through these slight depressions in the plain.

The soil of the Alföld is, for the most part, of exuberant natural fertility. This of course is in a great measure the result of geological conditions. The statistics which Dr. Ditz quotes with respect to the depth of its alluvial and diluvial strata, are very remarkable. Indeed it has not been possible to get to the bottom of them. "The alluvium close to Pest is 40-50 feet deep, and in other places above 90. Debreczin stands on a diluvial bank of a thickness of more than fifty fathoms. A boring was effected at Allios in the Banat to a depth of 495 feet without their piercing through the stratum of sand. On the whole we may estimate the thickness of these two recent deposits at not less than 400-500 feet in the midst of the Great Plain." But the fertility of the soil of the Alföld is not the result of geological conditions alone. Before 1848 the Alföld was a country without roads or railways; the population was sparse; and trade and commerce at their lowest ebb. Consequently but little more corn was grown than was required for the cultivator's own consumption. Immense tracts of land, the so-called *pusztas*, naturally

better adapted for crops of wheat and maize, served only as pastures for immense flocks of sheep and herds of long-legged, long-horned, cream-coloured oxen, and of half-wild horses. These animals could be more easily sent to the market across those tracks of summer's dust and winter's mud, which, by a misuse of language, were called roads. This state of negative passivity has been to a great measure put an end to by the advance of civilization, by the partial introduction of railways and canalization of rivers, and, last but not least, by the terrible pressure of taxation introduced by the Austrian Government after the war of 1849. Before that year the Hungarian peasant's favourite mode of investing his money was in flocks and herds, especially in oxen and horses, which he consequently called *jószág*, "property," without any explanatory clause or epithet. This "property" he was obliged to part with in order to satisfy the demands of the "German" tax-gatherer. The peasant had, in fact, to pay at least double the amount which he had paid before 1848, and this, although he then bore the whole burden of taxation, whereas since that year he has shared it with his "noble" compatriots. If, however, we consider not merely what the peasant paid during those two periods, but compare the total amount of taxes paid by the country at large, the figures will be perhaps even more startling. In the years 1843-45 Hungary,

Croatia, and Slavonia, without Transylvania or Dalmatia, paid thirty-four and a half million florins, whereas in 1864 the same countries paid one hundred and twenty-one and a half million florins. In the first period it is calculated that about eight millions passed definitely out of the country; in the second, however, forty-eight millions. These figures show how it is that the country has not benefited so much as might have been anticipated by the emancipation of the land in the year 1848.*

When the peasant had parted with his live-stock, he had still before his eyes the prospect of ever-recurring demands on the part of the "German"—demands which rather increased than diminished as time went on and the difficulties which beset the Viennese Government became more pressing. In order to meet them, it became necessary to plough up some of the old pasture-land, and sow it with corn. The natural consequence of this increase in the production of wheat and maize was a fall of prices. This necessitated a still further encroachment on the *puszta*. A tourist has observed of the country around Madrid, that Spain is the only country in which "cultivated deserts" are to be found. If he had ever travelled from six o'clock of a summer morning until four in the afternoon along

* Of this emancipation of the land I shall have to speak in a subsequent chapter.

the *Theiss Eisenbahn* from Pest to Nagy-Várad or Gross-Wardein, he might have seen cause to modify his statement. There the traveller passes from station to station on a plain as level—I had almost written more level—and as well cultivated as La Beauce, and asks, "Where is the population for which this railway is built, and where are the hands that till the broad endless fields which I see around me?"

Before 1848, there prevailed over this vast extent of country a system of agriculture, which Dr. Ditz calls "extersive," as opposed to the "intensive" system which prevails in more highly civilized, more highly cultivated countries, such, for instance, as our own. Dr. Ditz epigrammatically defines "extensive agriculture" as that in which man leaves irrigation to the rain, and desiccation to the sun. Here the effects of natural causes are much less modified by any efforts of the cultivator. Consequently the general production of the country, and the result of any particular harvest, depend almost entirely on those natural causes, the soil, the climate, &c. Of the natural fertility of the soil we have already spoken, the climate, however, is so bad as almost to counterbalance that advantage. To use Dr. Ditz's forcible expression, it has absolutely no self-control. Like the rest of the East of Europe, Hungary suffers from an extreme or continental climate. It is marked by

frequently-recurring droughts, by occasional violent floods, extreme heat during the summer, and equally extreme cold during the comparatively brief winter, both occasionally diversified by violent storm-winds, which sweep for miles without encountering any obstacle over the boundless plain, blinding and choking with their clouds of dust and sand not only the traveller on the treeless hedgeless road, but those who are hastening along the comparatively sheltered streets of Pest, Debreczin, or Szeged. The changes of temperature are not only great but sudden. It is by no means uncommon for the thermometer to sink 16° or 20° Reaumur in a couple of hours. One may get up in the morning with the thermometer only 7° R. above freezing point, to experience in the afternoon a heat of 27° R. in the shade. The so-called Hungarian fever, which has often proved fatal to invading armies and foreign travellers, is by many supposed to be caused by these sudden changes, against which the native Hungarian is more on his guard. A Magyar peasant maxim says: "My son, forget not thy bread in winter, nor thy pelisse in summer." This pelisse is of sheepskin, and every peasant carries one with him on a journey. Travellers of equal experience and higher rank take like care to provide themselves with extra clothing against the chills of the summer evenings. But the peculiarity of Hungarian climate which exercises the most dele-

terious influence on Hungarian agriculture is not so much the normal difference of temperature between day and night, summer and winter, as the exceptionally excessive temperature which now and then occurs. The winter is, on the whole, milder than in Germany; but for a few days there may prevail such a terrible degree of cold as is quite unknown in the latter country. So, too, the spring begins sooner, is much milder, and more favourable to vegetation; but far on in May the Hungarian husbandman trembles at the prospect of night-frosts. The vine-dresser does not feel at ease until he has left behind him that terrible triad of saints, Pancratius, Servatius, and Bonifacius (May 12th, 13th, and 14th), who have so often blasted all his hopes of the year.

But the peculiarities of the climate of the Alföld as regards temperature are not so disastrous as those which relate to moisture. Some persons are of opinion that the periodical droughts which afflict that region are becoming more frequent. For this they assign two reasons. Dr. Ditz produces some very good arguments for supposing that the Alföld was formerly not so destitute of trees as it is at present, and that the original forests have been rooted out by the recklessness of the Magyars themselves. A second and more recent cause is the great amount of land-drainage effected during the present century by Count Stephen Széchenyi, his associates and succes-

sors. The great work of the Regulation of the Theiss reclaimed to cultivation 217 geographical square miles of swamp. Before that time the river was continually overflowing its banks, and as the waters retired they left behind them pools in the hollows of the plain, which did not dry up for three or four years, and mitigated by their exhalations the excessive aridity of the Alföld summer. The bad effects upon the climate of this extensive drainage are the less to be disputed as its good effects are even more evident. As the pelican and other strange water-birds, formerly common along the course of the Theiss, have either wholly disappeared or have become exceedingly rare, so, too, are agues and marsh-fevers much less prevalent. The same reed-covered swamps which harboured those water-fowl were also haunted by *bctyárs* or cattle-stealers, whose knowledge of the few paths across the quaking morass, amid that dark green jungle of reeds high enough to conceal a pedestrian, and often a mounted horseman, enabled them to baffle the efforts of the *pandurs* or mounted constabulary of the county to apprehend them. In the neighbourhood of Szeged, at any rate, these *bctyárs* have almost disappeared since the Theiss has been regulated. This, of course, is the consequence, not merely of the disappearance of a great part of the jungle which sheltered them, but also of the change from pastoral to agricultural

pursuits. In most countries the shepherd is a brigand *in posse*, if not *in esse*, and this is still more true of the herdsmen who tend oxen or horses. Besides these human robbers, wolves, said to be larger and fiercer than those of the mountain forests, had their lairs among the reeds. They, too, are disappearing before the advance of cultivation.

Two measures have been recommended by the commission appointed to inquire into the possibility of increasing the rainfall of the Alföld. The first and most important is the construction of canals which should serve the double purpose of navigation and irrigation. This remedy would of course be very expensive, and, as capital is scarce in Hungary, the money would have to be borrowed abroad. I do not pretend to be competent to judge whether the superior cheapness of carriage and the advantages to be derived from irrigation would not make this canalization of the Alföld a more profitable undertaking than the railways which the Hungarians are now building so eagerly. I see by the newspapers that a step has been already taken in that direction. Surveys have been made for the construction of a canal from Pest on the Danube to Csongrád or Szeged on the Theiss.

The second measure recommended was an extensive plantation of trees, which has, indeed, been to some extent adopted. For this the co-operation of the Government is necessary in two ways. In the

first place, it has to reduce the land-tax on property laid out permanently as woodland, otherwise the proprietor could not afford to plant a crop so slowly remunerative as timber on land capable of producing anything else, and taxed as such. In addition to this, stricter laws must be passed and the rural police rendered more efficient in order to prevent the peasantry from stealing the trees as soon as they attain any size, or even injuring the young plants by the roadside out of mere wanton carelessness. But I am glad to say that signs of improvement in both these respects are already visible. The peasants themselves will soon see that the innovation is for their own advantage, and there is no means of protection so strong as public opinion. The most formidable obstacle to the re-foresting of the Alföld is the immensity of the task itself. I was told by a Government official connected with this undertaking that, leaving out of account the young trees which he had himself planted, there were not more than ten thousand trees in the whole county of Csanád, *i.e.* less than a dozen trees to the square mile. This is one of the counties of Hungary which I have never visited, but from further inquiries I am disposed to believe that his statement was a gross exaggeration; but that such a statement could be hazarded shows how destitute of trees the Alföld is over the greater part of its extent.

This want of trees is not only injurious in its effects on the climate in diminishing the rainfall of the district and increasing the violence of the winds, it tends to impoverish the soil by compelling the inhabitants to burn for fuel what ought to be returned to the ground as manure. The substance most used for firing in many parts of the Alföld is cowdung dried and made into bricks, but straw is also employed for the like purpose. In the terrible famine which afflicted this part of the country in 1863, both Catholic priests and Protestant pastors preached from their pulpits against the practice of burning wheaten straw, in the hope that they might thus be enabled to save some of the beasts alive. Indeed, such is the recklessness of the peasantry in this land of cereal abundance, that the reapers bivouacking out in the fields at harvest-time often protect themselves against the night-frosts by burning an unthrashed sheaf or two.

These fires out on the fields at night are one of the most prominent features of Alföld picturesqueness, especially just in that part of the season of autumn when the harvest has not yet come to an end and the shortening days are still warm, although the chilly nights remind the wearied reaper of the approach of winter. This, by the way, is the most delightful season for travelling, as the weather is then generally fine. Throughout a great part of the year

the climate of Hungary reminds us of Jacob's description of that of Padan-Aram: "In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night."

I have never seen the plains of the south of France, but imagine that in many particulars they must resemble those of Hungary. One feature at any rate is common to the scenery of both of them. In the absence of trees, hills, and in many places of houses, the Hungarian well and its adjuncts is a prominent object in the desert landscape. It is a deep shaft sunk in the sandy soil with a low wall, or rather parapet, generally of brick, round its mouth. The bucket, which floats on the surface of the water, is attached to the end of a long thin pole the other end of which is fastened, but so as to swing freely, to one end of a large wooden beam. This in its turn is poised on the top of a stout beam, or (if I may use the expression) wooden pillar, fixed in the ground. Adjoining are two troughs, one lower than the other, into which the wayfarer and the herdsman empty the full bucket which they have drawn up to water their thirsty cattle.

The vast and desolate character of the *pusztas* is enhanced by what Dr. Ditz calls the "Asiatic husbandry" of the Alföld Magyar. In its original form this Asiatic husbandry was characterized by the minimum of farm buildings. The Hungarian language bears witness to the fact that a covered stall

was an innovation borrowed from Germany. It is called *istálló*, a word derived from the German *stall*. Originally the Magyar confined his cattle in an unroofed fold, *akol*. Nor did he want a covered threshing-floor, as his corn was trodden out on the field by horses or oxen, almost as soon as it was cut. The corn was then laid up in bottle-shaped holes, narrower at the top than below, which were excavated in the ground, burnt dry, and lined with straw. These were his granaries. When filled, they were covered with straw, and above that with earth, which was then stamped down, so as to make it even with the ground. During the Russian invasion in 1849 the Cossacks, accustomed on their native plains to a similar system of agriculture, showed a fatal ability for discovering these subterranean granaries by probing the ground with their long lances. The extreme difficulty, not to say utter impossibility, of finding building materials over the greater part of the Alföld gave rise to these arrangements.

CHAPTER V.

ALFÖLD SCENERY.

How one should see Alföld Scenery—Baron Eötvös' Description—Petöfi's *Little Cumania*—*The Wilderness in Winter*—*The Stork*—Parallel Description by M. de Gérando.

THE preceding chapter was devoted to considering the Alföld rather from the point of view of a political economist than of an artist. The district is, however, equally striking as regards its scenery. What I have said of its soil, climate, agriculture, &c. has incidentally given my readers some idea of the effect which that scenery produced on my own mind and on that of Dr. Ditz, from whom I have borrowed so largely. Before passing on to a description of its cities and of the peasantry which inhabit it, I may detain the reader with some pictures of its landscape, sketched by native artists. As the steamboat and the railway afford facilities for crossing the Alföld in a few hours, the tourist will very likely miss the peculiar impressions which the aspect of its immense plains are

calculated to produce. The Theiss Eisenbahn will enable him to leave Pest early in the morning and arrive at Nagy-Várad, at the foot of the hills separating Transylvania from Hungary Proper, about four o'clock in the afternoon. In some respects the railway is a great boon to the traveller, as Hungary is a very large country, and the distances from one point of interest to another are often very great; but in order fully to appreciate the impressiveness of Alföld scenery, one should contemplate its grand monotony through a long summer day, while the silent peasant driver seems to devote his whole attention to his horses as he urges them along the sandy track which serves as an apology for a road. As I saw all around me stretching far away to the horizon, immense hedgeless fields of wheat, maize, hemp, here and there adorned by long rows of gigantic sunflowers, I was more than ever affected with a sense of the great toil of the husbandman. Yet the aspect of the plain is almost more impressive in autumn, when the crops are all gathered in, and the sight, unobstructed, ranges over a still further distance, the vast space being even less diversified than in early summer. As the long day spent in meditation comes to an end it is crowned by a splendid sunset, such as the narrow skies of mountain valleys can find no room for. He who travels for any length of time during the hot season on the open plain will be sure to fall in with the

wonders of the enchantress Morgana. In Hungarian this phenomenon is called *déli báb*, "noon-day phantom."

Baron Eötvös's novel, *A Falu Jegyzője* (*The Village Notary*), depicts Hungarian country life on the Great Plain, as it was before 1848. The tale has the defect of being too evidently written to serve a political purpose, and its peasant characters have a certain romantic unreality about them which might be expected in the production of a high-born philanthropist. But it is decidedly the most successful work of one of the most highly cultivated authors that Hungary has as yet produced. This is seen *inter alia* in his descriptions of Alföld scenery, which the Baron describes with a combination of the fond partiality of a patriot and the more objective treatment of a man of travel and education. The novel begins in the following manner:—

"Whoever has once traversed any portion of the Alföld on either side of the Tisza, or has spent but a few days in any one of its villages, may boldly say that he knows the whole of it. As in the case of certain families, so here, a long and near acquaintance is necessary to enable the observer to detect some slight points of diversity between different parts of that vast tract of country. When the traveller who has been surprised by sleep during his journey across its sandy plains wakes up a few hours after, the only

perceptible signs of his progress are afforded by the condition of his horses and the position of the sun. The general character of the scenery around him, and even its separate details, give no more indication of the progress he has made than does the monotonous waste of waters to the sailor in the midst of the Atlantic. The meadows which extend far and wide, whose undiversified appearance is only broken here and there by the tall wooden crane above some uncovered well, or by a few storks around a half-dried pool; the ill-cultivated fields whose wheat and maize are entrusted to the care of Providence, and the trouble any thief would have in carrying them away; here and there a lonely farmhouse, whose shaggy watch-dogs remind him by their barking of the sanctity of private property, and whose vast hay-ricks and straw-stacks, left from last year, prove that the farmer had a very abundant harvest, or keeps but a small amount of stock: all these objects he saw before him when he closed his eyes, all these he has still before him now they are open again. Even the very church-towers which he remembers observing when he last looked about him, standing like pointed columns on the distant horizon, seem to have travelled with him. At any rate he can discern as little difference between those he now sees and those he last saw, as between the village he had then left and the town which he is now approaching."

But Baron Eötvös, like most other Hungarian magnates, has something of the foreigner in his composition. Moreover, the tale from which our quotation is taken may be considered as a satire—friendly, indeed, but still a satire. Let us turn to the pages of a more sympathetic, and at the same time more Hungarian observer, the poet Petöfi. He never in his life passed the frontiers of his native land, and could thus compare the scenery of the Alföld only with the mountains of the north of Hungary and Transylvania. Pictures of its scenery abound in his pages; in my opinion the most vivid is one entitled *Kis-Kunság* (*Little Cumania*).

"Whither my heart, my soul has always and from every place sent back its longings, the beautiful *Kis-Kunság*, at last I beheld it again, the land of my birth! I traversed the plain which the arm of the Tisza-Duna embraces and holds in its lap, as a mother her dear smiling child.

"Here I am again in the endless uproar of the great city's life; but my imagination is still there on the plain of the Alföld. I close the eyes of my body and gaze with the eyes of my soul, and before me there hovers the Alföld scenery.

"It is burning midsummer; the sun climbs upwards; his beams, like flame-rain, flood the wilderness with a scorching deluge. . . . The wilderness is around me, a wide long wilderness; I, too, see far

away, even thither where the down-bending sky melts together with the earth.

"Across rich meadows passes the road; there the herd repose; the heat is sultry, nor do they now feed from the fat pasture. By the side of the hurdle-fence slumbers the herdsman on his outstretched mantle; his dogs, too, are lazy, nor even look after the traveller.

"Here, on the level ground, creeps along a water-course, nor does a wave of it move; only then does it splash when, perchance, some fishing-bird strikes it with its wing. Its channel is of fair sand; one can look right down to its yellow bed, on the parti-coloured troop of sluggish leeches and nimble insects.

"Beside its brim, among the dark green rushes, here and there a crane extends its neck; among them the mother of the storklings strikes her long beak into the water, gives a great gulp, and then raises her head and gazes daintily around; on the banks of the stream unnumbered peewits utter wailing cries.

"There stands sadly a great *ágas*;* once it might have been a well-crane; beside it is the trough, but broken down and overgrown with moss. As it were in a trance, this well-crane gazes on the distant mirage; I know not why it should gaze thereon, to be sure it hath seen the like often enough already.

* This is the Hungarian for the machinery described in the previous chapter for drawing water.

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"There is the mirage on the edge of the horizon; failing aught else it raises on high a worn-out old wayside inn, and holds it above the earth. Meanwhile the pasture has become scantier, at last all trace of it vanishes; yellow sand-hills arise, which the whirlwind builds up and throws down.

"At long distances single farmhouses appear, with ricks and stacks; above them caws the crow, here and there a surly watch-dog makes his rounds. A multitude of ploughed fields stretch irregularly around; above them the blessed wheat droops, the heavy grain draws down the ears.

"Amidst the green wheat open red poppies and blue cornflowers, with here and there a wild rose, like some bleeding star. Evening draws nigh; the white clouds grow golden: beautiful clouds! every one of them moves above us like a fairy tale.

"At last behold the town: in its midst the church with its great solemn tower; at the end of the street stand in a confused group the windmills with their broad vanes. How I love to stand before the windmills! I watch their vanes as they turn, unceasingly turn their somersaults."

Of course this description loses in translation, nor can I hope that the untravelled reader should appreciate it as I do. To me it recalls many a long drive on Hungarian roads behind my silent driver; before me the unending plain, and that clear expanse of sky

which no hilly country can boast of. But it is not always summer on the Alföld. Its winter, too, has its distinctive features, which Petöfi has sketched in in his poem, *A Puszta Télen—The Wilderness in Winter*:—

"Heigh! Now is the wilderness really a wilderness; for Autumn, like a reckless, bad husbandman, hath squandered lightly all that Spring and Summer had gathered; of all that treasure nought remains for Winter but the empty place.

"Without, there are neither the flocks of sheep with melancholy tinkling bells, nor the shepherd-boy with wailing reed; and the song-birds are all silent, nor is the voice of the loud corncrake heard in the grass; not even one little grasshopper plays his fiddle.

"Like a frozen sea shows the level plain; lower hovers the sun, like some weary bird, or, as if short-sighted with age, he must now stoop to see anything. . . . . As it is, he cannot see much in this waste desert.

"The fisher's hut and the field-ranger's house are now empty; the farms are quiet; within, the cattle eat hay. When towards evening they are driven out to the watering-trough, one or other shaggy heifer lows sadly, regretting the pool in the meadow.

"The cowherd takes down from the rafter the tobacco-leaves, places them on the threshold, cuts

them coarsely, and, drawing his pipe out of his boot, fills it, draws lazy whiffs, and looks to see if this or that manger be not empty.

"But even the wayside inns are now silent; the host and hostess can take long sleeps; nor, were they to throw away the cellar-key, would any one raise his stick against them. The winds strew all the ways with snow.

"Now rule the winds, the storms. One of them wanders whirling round on high; another gallops wildly below; beneath him sparkles the snow, like a firestone; the third comes onward to wrestle with them both.

"As they die down exhausted towards evening, pale mists settle on the plain, showing but indistinctly the form of the outlaw, whom his horse, sneezing, is carrying to his night's resting-place . . . . behind him the wolf, above him the raven.

"Like a king driven beyond the bounds of his realm, the sun looks back from the border of the earth; looks back once more with angry glances; and, as his eye reaches to the furthest horizon, his blood-stained crown falls from his head."

I had marked for translation another piece, entitled *Az Alföld—The Lowland*, but I do not wish to abuse my readers' patience, and will therefore content myself with a few stanzas from a little poem, *—A Gólya—The Stork:"—*

"I love the wilderness! There I feel myself truly free; there my eyes range unrestrained, where they will. No sullen rocks surround me, like threatening phantoms, flinging about the sounding brooks, as though rattling their chains.

"Nor let any one say that the wilderness is not beautiful. She has her beauties, but, as a bashful girl her face, covers them with a thick veil: before her well-known friends she lays it aside, and then the entranced eye gazes fixedly upon her, beholding a fairy princess.

"I love the wilderness! Therein have I taken my adventures on my spirited steed, and when I had come where no print of human foot might be seen, getting down from the saddle I stretched myself on the turf, and casting a hurried glance towards the lonely pool, whom saw I there? My friend, the stork."

With these descriptions may be compared the following concise and vivid picture of the impressions the same scenery produced on M. de Gérando:—

"Après Pesth commencent les *Puszta*. Les Hongrois appellent ainsi les steppes, situées au centre de leur pays. Elles s'étendent de Pesth à Debreczin, de Szegedin à Erlau, dans une circonférence de près de deux cent lieues. Généralement fertile, la terre présente l'aspect d'une mer de blé, qui ondule sous le vent; par fois sablonneuse, elle offre l'image du

désert ; ailleurs ce sont de riches prairies et des chevaux qui paissent. Pas de routes, pas de chemins ; seulement des traces de roues çà et là indiquent par où passent le plus de voitures. Autour de vous, à l'horizon, le mirage, dans l'eau duquel se baigne un clocher renversé. De loin en loin un puits—un simple trou en terre, une perche que l'on y fait descendre pour en tirer de l'eau, et un trou creusé qui sert d'abreuvoir. Souvent, aussi, un monticule, tombeau de quelque héros d'un autre âge. Au ciel, des cigognes qui volent. Puis, vers le soir, de tous côtés brillent des feux, allumés par des bergers, ou des marchands en route, qui rappellent les haltes des caravanes d'Égypte.

"Le spectacle continuel d'une plaine sans bornes peut paraître monotone ; mais c'est la monotonie de l'Océan. On ressent, au contraire, une vive et profonde impression lorsqu'en sortant des bâteaux du Danube, après avoir quitté la bruyante société française, anglaise, ou allemande, qui animait la traversée, on se trouve tout à coup sur cette terre étrange et silencieuse, emporté par quatre chevaux tatars, qui galopent sous le fouet d'un homme sauvagement vêtu. À l'étonnement se joint l'admiration. Il y a de la majesté dans cette étendue, quelque chose qui recueille et vous fait penser. Cette plaine sans limites, où le regard n'a pas d'obstacles, est une belle image de la liberté si chère aux Hongrois.

"Dans les Puszta, le lever et le coucher du soleil sont d'un magnifique effet. Le matin la terre est inondée d'une mer de vapeur rose, qui s'illumine quand le disque de feu paraît à l'horizon ; à la fin du jour, lorsque le soleil trace sa route ardente, la moitié du ciel est enflammée. On a comparé les nuits des Steppes à celles de Venise, pour la sérénité, la fraîcheur et la clarté des étoiles. Il faut encore voir les Puszta par un temps d'orage, quand d'un horizon à l'autre le firmament est déchiré par la foudre ; le vent balaie en maître cette immense surface, et les monticules de sable qui hérissent çà et là le désert tourbillonnent, se déplacent, et vont se reformer ailleurs."

CHAPTER VI.

ALFÖLD CITIES—DEBRECZIN.

Distribution of Population on the Alföld—Villages and Market-Places—Royal Free Cities—Statistics—My own Experiences—Nyiregyháza—Debreczin—Its Great Fairs—Railway Communication—The Calvinist's Rome; its Streets; its Industry—Wood and Water—Origin of Debreczin—Magistrates as a Church Body—Territories of Alföld Cities—Importance of Debreczin—Typical Character of its Citizens—Municipal Jealousies—Conservativism—Declaration of Independence in 1849—The Great Calvinist Church.

THE natural features of the scenery of the Alföld are not more remarkable or abnormal than the distribution of the population. The whole of the Alföld abounds in contrasts; no country in the world, perhaps, affords those who write of it such a ready stock of epigrammatic paradoxes. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that its villages are towns, and its towns villages,—both are at once so populous and so exclusively agricultural.

Hungarian law divided these clusters of human habitations into three classes, — villages (*faluk*,

Dörfer), market-places (*mezövárosok*, *Marktfleeken*), and "Royal Free Cities." The latter were privileged burghs, with territories of their own, and were not subject to the jurisdiction of the counties, but had elected magistrates of their own. The difference between "villages" and "market-places" consisted simply in the right which the latter possessed of holding markets and fairs. They were both of them subject communities governed by the counties in which they might be severally situated. Under the government of Schmerling some of the largest of these "market-places" received the right of self-government. Several of these emancipated communities found that right so burdensome that they took the first opportunity of petitioning the Hungarian Diet that they might be relieved from it, and return to their former state of tutelage under the authorities of their respective counties. Their inability to provide themselves out of their midst with magistrates whose characters should command respect and be above suspicion is one of those ugly facts which compel us to qualify our belief in the broad, self-laudatory statements of the Hungarians about their natural capacity for self-government. They show that the institution of the "nobility" had the effect of rendering the non-enfranchised classes in a great measure political minors.

Of the "Royal Free Cities," Szeged, called by the

Germans Szegedin, contained, according to the census of 1857, 62,700 inhabitants; Szabadka or Theresiopel, 53,500; Kecskemét, 39,400; Debreczin, 36,000. Of the "market-places," with a purely agricultural population, we find, amongst others, Hód-Mezö-Vásárhely, with 42,500 inhabitants; Csaba, Szentes, Makó, with from 26,000 to 27,000; Békés, Nagy-Körös, Félegyháza, Czegléd, Szarvas, with from 19,000 to 20,000; while in the same neighbourhood we find such villages as Orosháza, with 12,663; Mezö-Berény, with 9,660; Mindszent, with 9,163; Tót Komlós, with 8,575 inhabitants.

The reader's appreciation of these figures will be heightened by an examination on the map of the course of the middle Theiss, especially of the three adjacent counties of Békés, Csongrád and Csanád. There he will observe the spaces between these monster villages left blank, or but sparsely dotted over with the solitary farmhouses of the great landed proprietors. A careful examination of the statistics of the Alföld counties with regard to their extent in square miles, their population, and the number of towns and villages which they contain, will show that the state of things indicated by the figures we have given above is the rule and not the exception. They are 1,141 German square miles in extent, and contain only 1,052 towns and villages, which have an aggregate population of 2,932,000 souls; so that each of them

has an average territory of somewhat more than one German square mile, or twenty-one English square miles, and an average population of 2,786 souls. The *average* distance between any two of these places is consequently between four and five English miles, but the actual distance between any two of them may be, indeed often is, considerably more. I have never myself made the journey, but have been often told that the traveller who left Szarvas in the morning travelled all day in a light waggon to Csaba without passing through a single village on his way. A native told Dr. Ditz that the boundary of Hód-Mezö-Vásárhely was in some parts from five to six hours distant from the "market-place" itself. By an hour was meant a "good" German mile. Dr. Ditz seems to have thought that this statement would appear incredible to his German readers. To make it less so he mentions that on one occasion he travelled in one direction more than two and a half German miles—between eleven and twelve English—without quitting the territory of Vásárhely. I myself have had less experience of Alföld travelling than Dr. Ditz, but remember one afternoon going out from Szeged, a distance of about three and a half hours, to a cluster of small farms considerably nearer to the town than the furthest point of its territory.

The traveller who approaches one of these great centres of population on the Alföld will, or, at least, if

sufficiently observant, may remark a characteristic feature of their system of husbandry. While he is yet a great way off he passes through a desert pasture-land, almost, if not entirely, destitute of all human habitations. This is succeeded by a zone of arable land, studded more or less thickly with the houses of the cultivators. Leaving these behind him he passes through another zone of pasture-land as deserted as the first, and thus at last reaches the town.

My own experience of these Alföld towns and villages is, as far as residence is concerned, confined to Szeged and Debreczin. In the summer of 1866 I spent about two months in the first place and six weeks in the second. I had, however, *visited* the latter on two previous occasions. While residing at each of these two towns, I of course made excursions in the adjoining country, though I did not see as much as I should have wished of the neighbourhoods of either of them,—partly on account of the cholera then prevailing, partly on account of my own weak state of health. I have besides driven through H.-M.-Vásárhely and Mindszent, and slept a night at Nyiregyháza in the county of Szabolcs. I had come down from the north-east upon Tokay the previous afternoon, intending there to take the railway for Pest; but, as it was early in the month of [redacted], there was only one passenger-train then running [redacted]day. My driver immediately proposed that we

should cross the Theiss to the village of Rakomaz, and after baiting the horses, proceed to Nyiregyháza, which we reached about ten o'clock at night. This was the first occasion in which I noticed the zones of desert pasture divided, as it were, by a ring of partially inhabited settlements. Another feature which gave interest to the drive was the steep volcanic hill of Tokay, which juts out into the plain like some promontory into the sea. As long as the light of the short spring evening allowed, I kept continually looking back to observe it sinking slowly below the horizon, as the sea-coast sinks before the eyes of one outward bound. From this hill of Tokay one may travel southward 250 English miles towards Peterwardein and Belgrade, without passing any elevation more important than a *buczka* or sand-hill piled up by the wind, or a mound of earth a few feet high, probably the sepulchral mound raised over some prehistoric chief. Such mounds are commonly called *kún-halom*, "Cuman hill," or, in some cases, *török domb*, "Turkish mound." Consequently this abrupt volcanic hill of Tokay is visible for an immense distance over the plain.

My next morning's stroll about the village-like streets of Nyiregyháza showed a want of public buildings, architectural beauty, and all other signs of municipal energy or civilization as might have delighted Mr. Archibald A. Paton himself, for the

place contained (even in 1839) 16,128 inhabitants. What a convincing proof, he would have exclaimed, of the Mongolian barbarism of the Magyars! Unfortunately the inhabitants of Nyiregyháza, although they are now beginning to talk Magyar pretty generally, are Slovacks, and Lutheran Slovacks too. A sufficient proof, if proof were needed, that the barbarism which he discovered on the Alföld is the result not of blood, but of political and social conditions. The largest and most imposing building in Nyiregyháza is the great Lutheran Church, built of brick and raised above the fat mud of the Great Plain on a brick terrace of about two feet high. It has, however, no claims to architectural distinction. It may not be amiss to mention that Nyiregyháza is a railway-station on the *Theiss Eisenbahn*, and is the largest place in the county of Szabolcs, although Nagy-Kálló is the county town.

However, as I said before, Debreczin and Szeged are the two places on the Alföld which I know best. I shall, therefore, devote the remainder of this, and the following chapter, to some account, however imperfect, of the impressions made on me by these two towns, and the information which I have been able to gather with regard to them. Although my residence in Szeged preceded that in Debreczin in point of time, I shall speak of the latter place first. This preference will be sufficiently explained by what I have to say of each of them.

"*Bolond nagy falu!*" ("What a senselessly large village!") was the exclamation of Prince Eszterházy's herdsman when in 1855 he visited London. The words could not but recur to me, as I looked down from the tower of the great Calvinist Church upon the "wide-wayed city" of Debreczin. As M. de Gérando says, it is merely the Hungarian hamlet multiplied many times over. Almost all the houses have only a ground-floor. Those which have a first story are very few, those that are still higher may be counted on one's fingers. They are, in fact, public buildings. Nevertheless, the place contains more than 36,000 inhabitants, and is the commercial centre of a large part of Hungary. Its commercial importance was, however, much greater before railways were introduced into the country. In those days its four annual fairs presented a scene resembling that of Nijni-Novgorod. Even now they attract a large concourse of dealers in all sorts of wares, buyers of wool, hides, and other raw produce; sellers of grocery, toys, articles of clothing, &c. The peasant having parted at one sale with the whole produce of the year, immediately proceeds to make his purchases for the next. These fairs are held on the sandy plain outside the town, where an immense number of wooden booths or temporary shops are set up, whilst still further out the cattle-market is held amongst clouds of dust not to be matched in

England. Before 1848 the Jews who attended these fairs were not allowed to sleep in the town. Indeed, I believe that a great number of dealers still pass the night in their booths amongst their merchandise.

The Theiss Railway, connecting the east of Hungary with Western Europe, was opened in 1847 as far as Szolnok on the Theiss. It then took ten years to reach Debreczin, and in the course of the following year (1858) was extended to Miskolcz and Kaschau. Now that Hungary has recovered its autonomy its railway system will be more rapidly developed. The citizens of Debreczin hope in a few months to have railway communication with Szatmár and Sziget in the north-eastern corner of the kingdom.

The Hungarians are very fond of comparing small things with great. Hence Debreczin is often called the Hungarian Rome, or the Calvinist's Rome. By far the larger portion of its inhabitants are Calvinists. Its principal building—the one, indeed, which dominates the Town—is not the Town-hall, but the great Calvinist Church, the largest building belonging to that denomination in the whole of Hungary and Transylvania. Behind it, separated by a small enclosed square, stands the *Collegium*, in like manner the largest building they have for educational purposes.

In front of the great church is the so-called *piacz*, or market-place, which is nothing more than an open

unenclosed space, left unbuilt upon and only partially paved—if "paved" be the right word to use—with round blocks of wood beaten into the yielding sandy soil. The *trottoirs* in the principal streets are paved in the same manner, as is also a certain breadth, sufficient to allow two carriages to pass on it, in the midst of the superfluously wide street. The spaces between this roadway of wooden blocks and the *trottoirs* on either side are left in a state of nature: in dry weather a mass of shifting sand, which the whirlwinds, so common on the Great Plain, beat into the faces of the passers-by; in wet weather a morass, in which the peasant sinks up to the tops of his high boots.

Although Debreczin still preserves the character of an agricultural town, some branches of manufacturing industry have of late years been established there. They are, of course, only such branches as are intimately connected with agriculture, for instance, grinding flour and manufacturing beet-root sugar. I do not know whether this infant manufacturing interest is likely to be benefited or not by the increase of intercommunication. Coal is in Hungary scarce and dear; not so much because the country contains but few coal-mines, as on account of the want of railways to distribute the produce of such as are already worked. Consequently, Hungarian manufacturers are for the most part dependent on

the forests in their neighbourhood for their supply of fuel. At present the neighbourhood of Debreczin satisfies the requirements both of its inhabitants and its manufacturers; but there is no subject which so much occupies the careful consideration of its more thoughtful citizens as the necessity of not only carefully economizing the produce of their own forests, but also by means of improved communication bringing to their town the timber of the North-Eastern Carpathians. This it is proposed to effect by means of a canal, which will bring the waters of the Tisza (*Germ.* Theiss) to Debreczin from Tisza-Lök, a distance of about thirty-six English miles. Whether they will be able to get money for this undertaking I do not know; but unless some such means are taken to furnish the town, not merely with fuel, but also with water, it is more likely to decay than to flourish.

In fact, its site was not chosen by enlightened commercial speculation. Debreczin may be said to owe its origin to a sort of fortuitous concourse of atoms. It existed in the Middle Ages as a "Royal Free City," but its comparatively vast size dates from the days of the Turkish invasion. Thirteen villages —and nowhere are villages so large as on the Hungarian *Alföld*—were left desolate and without inhabitants in what now constitutes the, according to our ideas, over-grown territory of Debreczin. Palugyay, quoted

by Mr. Hunfalvy in his *Statistics of the Austrian Empire*, estimates the extent of that territory at eighteen German geographical square miles.* Its annual revenue, derived from the common pastures, woods, local rates, &c. &c., amounts, as I was informed, to 800,000 florins. Before 1848 the whole amount of its contributions to the expenses of the State was 32,000 florins. In those days a "*civis*," as a citizen of Debreczin loves to call himself, never knew what it was to pay taxes personally to the State. The elected officers of his municipality paid, as a first charge upon its revenues, the sum demanded by the *fiscus*. To show how completely that age of gold has become a thing of the past, it may be sufficient to mention that the *Verzehrungs-Steuer*, or excise on the consumption of meat and wine, alone amounted to 70,000 florins in the year 1866.

An English gentleman who recently explained to an English audience his views about men and things Hungarian, spoke of Protestantism as enjoying a sort of endowment, perhaps not directly from the State itself, but from the local authorities. When I pointed out this statement to a Hungarian correspondent of mine, who is fond of calling himself a "*civis*" of Debreczin, he answered that he thought the mistake very pardonable in a foreigner, and then

* A German geographical square mile contains 9,567 Austrian catastral joch. Of these jochs 100 = 142 English acres.

proceeded to show how it might be supposed to have arisen. His explanation was somewhat as follows :— According to the laws which prevailed in Hungary before 1848, non-nobles were incapable of acquiring real property; and the most important privilege of the Royal Free Cities, and of the free districts, consisted in this, that the several municipalities, being considered by the law as so many noble individuals, were consequently in their corporate capacity capable of acquiring and possessing real estates. Individuals, members of such privileged communities, did not acquire and possess landed property in their own names, but in that of the "noble city." The necessary consequence of this state of things was that the elected political authorities of such communities were at the same time administrators and managers of a large amount of private property held in the name of the town. Besides this, another peculiar circumstance must be taken into consideration. In those free towns whose inhabitants were exclusively Protestants, or were such to so large an extent that the non-Protestants might fairly be left out of calculation, the elected political authorities of the municipality were at the same time the ecclesiastical authorities of the religious community, or, to use the technical expression of the Hungarian Protestants, of the *ekklézsia* (*Kirchengemeinde*). Thus the Town-Council of Debreczin united in itself three characters. It

was at once a board of magistrates invested with political authority, *ex-officio* trustees of private property, and the *presbyterium* of the Calvinist congregation. Instead of first of all dividing amongst the parties respectively thereto entitled the proceeds of the property administered in common, and then collecting from the same parties the sums due from them for ecclesiastical and educational purposes, the town-council simplified its proceedings by first of all subtracting those dues from the income derived from the property it administered, and only then distributing the remainder. Thus, in the case of a forest which was purchased with the money of private individuals, it cuts down annually one-sixtieth part, assigns a few hundred cords of wood for warming the *Collegium* and for the requirements of the pastors and the professors, and only then distributes the remainder among the representatives of the actual purchasers of the forest. This it will be seen is merely the voluntary system, although it happens to be carried out by the political authorities.

There are, of course, several points of resemblance between Debreczin and Szeged; and it is just these points of which a passing traveller takes cognizance. Besides the material external appearance of the towns themselves, may be mentioned the vast extent of their territories. This is a feature common to most of the towns and villages on the Alföld. Dr. Ditz,

on the authority of Palugyay, gives the following figures:—The territory of Debreczin contains 18 square miles, *i.e.* German geographical square miles, that of Szabadka or Theresiopel 30, or according to others 34 such square miles, Hód-Mezö-Vásárhely 11¼, Szegedin 10½, Kecskemét 10, Török Szent Miklos 10½, Mezö Tur 7½, Karczag 7 square miles. In a note, however, he observes that these figures do not agree with those given by Galgóczy in his *Mezögazdasági Statistika*, which states the territory of Theresiopel as only 16 square miles, of Debreczin, on the contrary, as 19·2, of Szegedin 18·7, H.-M.-Vásárhely 13·5. This statistical uncertainty is very characteristic of Hungary. Few of Joseph II.'s hasty measures of reform excited greater disaffection or encountered more effectual resistance, than his census and land-survey. The first thing the county authorities did when at the end of his reign they regained their power, was to burn his registers and his maps. I myself once asked a Calvinist professor how many volumes the library of his *collegium* contained. He answered that they had stated the number to be so-and-so many when the Government of Bach held its census. "At the same time," added he, "I do not attach much importance to the answer; in fact, we detested the whole business so much that we merely sent in an answer which we thought approximately true, so as to get rid of them."

The territory of Debreczin, whatever may be its extent, enjoys great renown in Hungary as containing within its limits the *Hortobágyi Puszta*, or "wilderness" of Hortobágy, so celebrated in the songs of the peasantry and the poems of Petöfi.

As far as social position and influence is concerned, Debreczin must be admitted to be superior to Szeged. The latter town used to be styled the city of carriers and soap-boilers, the former of pork-butchers; but then it contains the *Collegium*. That institution alone ensures Debreczin an element of culture which is wanting at Szeged. Were it not for the intense jealousy and suspicion with which Hungarians in general, and especially Hungarian Calvinists, regard anything which savours of centralization, Debreczin might easily have become more important than it is. Hungary, exclusive of Transylvania and Croato-Slavonia, was divided for civil and political purposes into four "circles." They were called respectively the Cis-, and Trans-Danubian and the Cis-, and Trans-Tybiscan circles. This inartistic division has also been adopted by the Evangelicals of the Helvetic Confession. Besides the awkwardness of cutting up the country into long thin strips, this arrangement has the disadvantage of dividing the adherents of the Helvetic Confession into very unequal bodies. The Protestants of this confession, or, as they call themselves, the Reformed, are much more

numerous in the Tybiscan circles than in the Danubian, most especially in the Trans-Tybiscan, of which Debreczin is the chief town. Here should have been placed the central institutions of the Reformed.

One of my friends at Debreczin, a well-known Reformed clergyman, observed to me that if the history of Debreczin were well written it would be more interesting and instructive than that of any other town in Hungary. Nowhere else has the Magyar peasant's character had so free a field for development, one so little influenced by any foreign admixture. In Szeged there were Serbs; besides which it was inhabited by carriers who learnt the languages of other nationalities and frequented their markets. Kolozsvár (*German* Klausenburg) was for a long time the seat of the Court of the princes of Transylvania, and after that Court had disappeared was the winter residence of the Transylvanian aristocracy. So too in Nagy-Várad were the county authorities, and in winter the "noble" landed proprietors of the great county of Bihar. In Debreczin there was no admixture of nationalities, nor, if we deduct the Reformed superintendent with his clerical staff, and the *Collegium* with its teachers and scholars, was there any admixture of classes. The whole population was a homogeneous mass of Magyar peasant-burghers.

I do not know whether this homogeneity produced any good results. One thing at any rate is certain,

that the Debrecziners are everywhere spoken against, and by none so severely as by their neighbours, although the latter are fellow-Magyars, and for the most part fellow-Calvinists. If the word "*civis*" is assumed by the Debrecziner himself as a title of honour, in the mouths of his neighbours of Miskolcz and Várad, and of the *táblabirák* * of Szabolcs and Bihar, it became an uncomplimentary nickname. Some go so far as to maintain that the population of that metropolis of sausage-makers are not even of Magyar origin, but are the descendants of those strange Mohammedan heretics, the Ishmaelites, who during the Middle Ages competed as money-lenders with the Jews themselves. They are accused of being selfish, unfriendly, greedy of gain, and—worst of vices in the estimation of a Magyar—inhospitable. A friend of mine, himself proud of the title of *civis*, observed to me that, as a purely democratic body, it was to be expected that they should attach greater importance to material prosperity than their aristocratic neighbours. Nor was it to be wondered at that these latter should entertain an unfavourable opinion of the sturdy burghers, whose rights they were in a tacit conspiracy to curtail. As regarded the charge of inhospitality, he would have me observe that the *civis* went seldom or never from home, while all the world was continually coming to Debreczin, so that in a commerce of

* Country Squires.

hospitality, he would have lost considerably. In a country like Italy, in which almost every city has been at some time or other a sovereign state, and has the remembrance of its municipal history preserved by splendid monuments, we are not surprised at finding such local jealousies prevalent. Yet these feelings are hardly less strong in Hungary amongst its unadorned and, as far as all outward appearance goes, unorganized village-towns.

But the feature in the character of the *civisek* which most strikes a stranger's observation is their inveterate conservatism. In Hungary, theatres are considered useful in two ways, as giving the uneducated classes an idea of a more cultivated state of society than their own, and also as establishing and confirming the superiority of the "national" * language over those of the "nationalities." Accordingly, patriotic gentlemen and citizens have established a theatre in Debreczin; but they find themselves much thwarted by the obstinate conservatism of the Calvinist *civis*. The latter, in his own narrow way a patriot too, objects to going to the theatre because his grandfather never went; as, indeed, how should he, seeing there was no theatre for him to go to? I have heard of Calvinist peasants in the neighbourhood who do not even send their children to school, using the argu-

* *i. e.* Magyar, as opposed to the German, Rouman, and Slav dialects.

ment: "Thy father is an ass, and it is not meet that thou should'st know more than him." This, however, I take to be mere *pletyka* (gossip), as the Hungarian Reformed of all classes generally attach great importance to their children receiving the *traditional* modicum of schooling.

The extreme conservatism of the *civisek* was further illustrated by their associating the ideas of lamps and taverns. It is within the memory of men now living that the streets of Debreczin were without any artificial light after nightfall, except that here and there some wily publican had hung out an oil lamp whose glimmering light might attract some thirsty, darkling wanderer. But the fashion of establishing social clubs, or, as they are there called, *casinos*, set by Count Stephen Széchenyi, spread as far as Debreczin. As the casino held its meetings in a house opposite to one of the Reformed churches, it was thought advisable to set up a lamp in front of the sacred building for the convenience of the members of the club who had to cross the street in the dark. This caused great dissatisfaction among the *civisek*, who complained that the "gentlemen" had turned the church into a tavern.

As a proof that the Calvinists of Debreczin are behind the mass of their countrymen in civilization, I was told that the rate of mortality is higher among them than among the Catholic and Jewish residents

in that town. Statistics are, however, often misleading. In the present instance it should be remembered that the great mass of the *proletariat*, of the lowest labouring class, belongs to the Reformed church, while the Jews and Catholics are, for the most part, immigrants, much fewer in numbers, and containing a smaller proportion of really needy persons.

Among the accusations, just and unjust, which the neighbours of Debreczin bring against the *civisek*, is the capital one of want of patriotism. It would be presumptuous on the part of a stranger and sojourner like myself to decide how far this charge is, or is not, founded on facts. Indeed, I do not know why a like accusation should not be brought against the mass of the people in other places, both in Hungary and out of it. However that may be, Debreczin has been in very recent times the scene of interesting political events. When, in the winter of 1848, the Hungarian Government and the Hungarian Legislature fled from Buda-Pest before the Austrian army under Prince Windischgräz, it was in Debreczin that they found a place of refuge. Arrived there, they were protected by some hundred of miles of almost impassable roads and the broad stream of the yellow Tisza. Here, in the heart, or rather on the eastern or further side of the Magyar area, Kossuth directed the national struggle against the Viennese Government. The sittings of the Diet were held in the

private chapel of the Calvinist *Collegium.* On the memorable 14th April, 1849, the Dictator made the celebrated and untoward declaration of Hungary's independence, and proclaimed that the house of Habsburg had forfeited by its crimes the Apostolic Crown of St. Stephen. To give this declaration greater solemnity and publicity the Diet adjourned, the Dictator at its head, to the great Calvinist church. The communion-table, as is the case in all Reformed churches, is about halfway down one side of the building, just under the pulpit, and marks the place where the great Agitator stood while reading the proclamation.

Like most of the larger edifices in Hungary, the church is built in a renaissance style, with no great pretensions to architectural beauty. Its distinguishing feature is its great size. It is by far the largest Protestant edifice in the country, and appears perhaps larger than it really is by comparison with the small houses which compose the town, and the immense level plain which it overlooks. In one of its towers an immense bell is pointed out to the English visitor, presented by Prince George Rákóczy I., and cast from cannon taken by him from the "German."

CHAPTER VII.

ALFÖLD CITIES—SZEGED.

Szeged—Its unorganized Appearance—Water-Supply—A Local Dish—Learning Hungarian—Dolce far niente—The Cholera—St. Rosalia—An English Sportsman—The Town-House—"Nobles" wanted—An Army Contractor as Lord-Lieutenant—Magyarized Germans—Municipal Subservience—Passports for Horses—Magyar Thieves—Drought and Famine—Government Relief—Increased Taxation.

JUST as the stranger makes readiest acquaintance with the "wide-wayed" city of Debreczin from the towers of its great Calvinist church, so, with a like intent, he ascends the staircases of the Town-house to get a bird's-eye view of the "wide-wayed" city of Szeged. The two towns exhibit a striking family likeness; but they are not without their points of difference. Debreczin stands in the midst of a slightly elevated *plateau* of sand, far from the Tisza or any of its tributaries. Szeged, on the contrary, is built on the western bank of that river, nearly opposite the point where the Maros flows into it from the east. The water-supply of Debreczin is wholly

derived from wells deeply sunk in the sand; while a peculiar feature of the streets of Szeged is a number of little booths or sheds for the sale of river-water imperfectly filtered. The latter town is divided into four parts, Palánka, with the Upper and Lower Town on each side of it, along the bank of the river, and an inland suburb, called Rókus. The *piacz* or great market-place—and a very large one it is—is situated in Palánka, with the town-hall on the side furthest from the river, and on the opposite side a castle or fortified building, said to have been erected by the Turks, and at the present day of the very smallest conceivable use. Palánka derives its name from the *planken* or palisades with which it was fortified during the Turkish wars.

The town is even more irregularly built than Debreczin itself, and, speaking merely from memory, I should say covered a very much greater extent of ground, even more than might be expected from its larger population. The immense extent of its straggling *piacz*, and the want of a decidedly dominant mass of building, such as Debreczin possesses in the juxtaposition of its great church and its college, gives Szeged a still more unorganized appearance than even Debreczin presents. As far, however, as the ordinary conveniences of life are concerned, Szeged has made a great advance within the last few years. Stories are told of a cow having disappeared bodily

in a slough in the midst of the market-place. I was there in a very dry summer, but fancy that a similar story would not gain credence if told as having happened at the present day. Besides, some of the central streets in Palánka enjoy a certain amount of paving, a very recent innovation in Szeged. In the suburbs is still to be seen the more primitive substitute for a *trottoir,* consisting of long thin planks of wood laid along the sides of the streets over the mud. When a peasant encountered on this plank-path any one in the dress of a gentleman, he obligingly stepped off it into the mud, although the consequence of his courtesy was that he sank in the half-liquid mass up to the tops of his high boots, or, according to some of my informants, even over them.

The town is supplied with river-water from the Theiss. It is imperfectly filtered, and sold in small stalls or boxes scattered about the streets at a farthing a jug. A farthing is also the charge for watering an ox or a horse. When I first arrived in Szeged, and took up my quarters at an inn, I found the water given me to drink of a dark turbid colour. In the coffee-houses it was as bad. It would be scarcely unfair to call it diluted mud. Yet it seems to be not unwholesome, and is really more objectionable to the eye than to the palate. I was told that, when the river is high and overflows its banks, the water has been found on analysis to contain 10 per cent of earth. On complaining to

the waiter, he answered, after the manner of his tribe, "This water is too fat to become quite clear, although it is twice filtered, once in the public filters, and again in our own,"—doubtless a professional fib, for I afterwards drank in private houses river-water which was clear, bright, and even sparkling. The climate of the Alföld is very dry, and both natives and strangers imbibe a great deal. The better classes in Hungary are all more or less hydropathists. Indeed, they are as much connoisseurs in water as the Spaniards are said to be, in which respect I myself happen to agree with them. Those who drink the waters of the Tisza, and especially the good people of Szeged, are very proud of their beverage, assuring strangers of its superiority not only to well-water but even to that of the Danube. At first, I must admit that it seemed to me "stale, flat, and unprofitable," but a very few days' drinking reconciled me to it, and I now remember with feelings of regret those limpid draughts, compared to which the water of mountain springs seems hard and indigestible.

When I announced my intention of staying for some weeks at Szeged, I was not only complimented for the good taste I displayed in so doing, but also assured that I should grow fat there. This they devoutly attributed to the virtues of the water. However, I was told the same thing at Debreczin. Some sceptics might ascribe the result to the exceedingly

rich cookery *en vogue* on the Alföld, and perhaps somewhat to the indolent habits induced by its climate during the summer months. Of course I am here speaking of the well-to-do classes. The peasantry of the Alföld are in physical strength at least equal to any other population in Hungary, and those of Szeged are peculiarly handsome and well-made.

Why the cookery on the plain is so much more greasy than the cookery in the hills I am unable to explain. The fact is, however, notorious; so much so, that families living in one district will not willingly engage a cook out of the other. As Szeged is close to the Theiss—and of that river a popular saying assures us that it contains more fish than water—the town is especially noted for its *halász lé*, "fisherman's soup." This is a sort of hash made of all sorts of fish found in the Theiss, and stewed in a very hot gravy with an abundance of native red pepper, not unlike the French dish *bouillabaisse*, celebrated in Thackeray's well-known ballad. It is especially fortunate for the good people of Szeged that they live by the side of a fish-full river, for unlike the *civisek* of Debreczin, they are almost all Catholics.

I spent two of the hottest months of the very hot summer of 1866 in Szeged. I could not recommend many of my countrymen to do likewise. They would vote it "slow," which of course it was. But then I had an object in view; it was one which I had

been long pursuing and at last found within my reach,—such a knowledge of the Magyar language as would enable me to converse in it with fluency and ease. In Szeged I had the good fortune not only to find comfortable quarters, but also kind neighbours in the same house, two gentlemen who made a point of talking to me in no other language but Magyar. What for me constituted at least half the difficulty of acquiring that language was the extreme diffusion of German, not to say of French and English, among educated persons, the very people in fact with whom conversation is most natural and most pleasant. As a rule, the higher one goes in Hungarian society, whether we consider conventional rank or mental education, the smaller shall we find the attachment to the national language. Exceptions there are, but it took me a long time to light upon such under circumstances which enabled me fully to avail myself of their zeal and friendship. Of course I had before learnt a great deal from persons who, with more or less justice, called themselves *betyárs*. Such persons, however, have not much perseverance, and, though at first amused by the novelty of the task, soon gave up the attempt to "magyarize" one who was, after all, *ostoba német*, "a stupid German." Here at Szeged several favourable circumstances happened to coincide; I brought with me a very respectable store of words, phrases,

and grammatical knowledge, and found there leisure, and leisured and sociable friends, who were withal zealous for the national language and spoke German neither easily nor well. And so it came to pass that I left Szeged at the end of two months with the satisfactory consciousness that I had made a decided advance, and the certain hope of advancing still further at Debreczin.

But the charm of my life at Szeged did not, perhaps, consist entirely of such reasonable elements. There are certain frames of mind and forms of enjoyment which an Anglo-Saxon, doubtless for good reasons, generally prefers to describe by foreign words such as *Gemüthlichkeit* and *Dolce far niente.* Both of these feelings, the one social, the other individual, I enjoyed to the utmost at Szeged. The heat of the weather, in fact, made reading Petöfi's poems, playing chess, studying the progress of the Prussian armies in German and Hungarian newspapers, and unceremonious conversation, appear quite sufficient occupation if not for a lifetime, at any rate for the summer months.

The great drawback to my enjoyment was the cholera, which the victors of Königgrätz brought with them into the Austrian empire. This was the more unpleasant as my own health at the time seemed to forebode an attack. Like many other Hungarian towns, Szeged has but few churches in

proportion to its vast population, in fact only one in each of the four quarters into which it is divided. As the bells were tolled after the death of every person whose relations could afford to pay him that vain mark of respect, we were reminded of the presence of the plague all day long. Many persons complained bitterly of the clergy and the authorities for allowing the panic which so fatally assists the spread of the disorder, to be thus aggravated. Nor was this all. Szeged possesses an object of Roman Catholic pilgrimage in a chapel dedicated to St. Rosalia. As it was the season of harvest, the peasantry could not afford time during the working hours of the day for their religious services. Consequently they organized midnight processions to the chapel to implore the intercession of the saint. These were attended by immense multitudes, exhausted by long hours of toil in the torrid fields, excited by religious feelings and the contagion of numbers, and exposed to the chill air and dews of night. In these crowds the pestilence of course raged with increased intensity.

After the account I have just given of my summer's stay in Szeged, it is but fair that I should mention that an English officer spent a month or six weeks of a recent winter there very pleasantly in shooting game and waterfowl. Of these there are still a great many in the neighbourhood. Should

another Englishman follow his example, the inhabitants, with true Magyar hospitality, would be sure to do all they could to make his stay agreeable to him. How changed the country will be in a few years, when improved means of communication shall have made foreign tourists less rare than at present!

I have said that the Town-house is the most conspicuous building in Szeged. Its history is interesting, as illustrating a peculiarity of the old Hungarian constitution. The so-called Royal Free Cities were always regarded as *peculium regis*, and as such were, until 1848, kept practically *in statu pupillari*. They were not allowed to dispose of any sum greater than sixty florins without obtaining the assent of the *Concilium Locumtenentiæ* (*Statthalterei*), or Council of Lieutenancy, which sat at Buda. It was in the last century that the city of Szeged required a better Town-house. The *Concilium Locumtenentiæ* did not, however, see the necessity. The *polgármester* (*Bürgermeister*), or, as we might perhaps call him, the mayor, of Szeged, was at that time one Wohlfahrt, an immigrant from Upper or Northern Hungary, whose name indicates his German origin. This man having made application to the Council for permission to build the Town-house, and not obtaining it, proceeded to build all the same, meanwhile repeating his application, and alleging further arguments why it should be granted. While this correspondence went

on between the mayor and the Council, the building was completed. The Government Board then recognized the *fait accompli*, and left the new Town-house standing, a monument of a successful defiance of their authority.

The mention of Wohlfahrt's name reminds me of the fact that, judging from observations made to me in conversation by citizens of Szeged, the magistracy of that town were in a comparatively recent past largely recruited from Northern Hungary. The cause of this is not far to seek. Szeged was situated in the very midst of the country occupied by the Turks, and most exposed to the ravages of their troops. Before these marauders education, wealth, and rank fled away to take refuge in the North. When the Turks were expelled, the country they had harassed and plundered was occupied for the most part by a wretched peasantry, sunk in barbarism, ignorance, and poverty. In many places the villages were nothing more than clusters of subterranean huts—as it were, human burrows. Of course the returned descendants of the refugees, and the immigrants, either from foreign lands or from the more fortunate parts of the country, brought with them the elements of civilization and of power. How scarce *nemes emberek*, or "noblemen," were in this part of the country may be imagined from the fact that a non-noble was once made *szolgabiró*, or *judex nobilium*,

in the neighbouring county of Csanád; although it was one of the fundamental privileges of a Hungarian "nobleman" to be tried only by his peers.

So valueless was the soil of the unpeopled country that the grandfather of one of the present representatives of Debreczin in the Diet preferred to receive, in satisfaction of a pecuniary claim, two vineyards in the neighbourhood of Tokay rather than the town of Balmacz-Ujváros in the county of Szabolcs. One of the army contractors, and consequently creditors of the Austrian Government, in the reign of Charles VI., was a certain baker named Harneker. As the Government was not able to satisfy his demands in cash, he asked for two floating flour-mills on the Danube under the fortress of Buda to be given him. The matter was referred for consideration to the commandant of the place. His answer was that the two mills in question were indispensably necessary for the provisioning of the place. Consequently the baker was obliged to accept, much against his will, the whole county of Békés and the title of baron. The condition of the county at that time may be judged from the fact that its present population is, for the most part, descended from Slovack colonists who have immigrated since the grant was made to Harneker. It was then almost a wilderness, and, to a great extent, a fever-haunted swamp thinly inhabited by a few semi-savages. Over this district Harneker

ruled as landlord and lord-lieutenant at the same time. How the county was administered, and its magistrates elected, may be judged from the following scene. Harneker opened a county sessions with the laconic speech :—

"*Salvete, domini comitatus : ego faciam restaurationem : dominus vice-comes maneat, qui est bonus homo ; dominus ordinarius notarius excat, qui est——;*" using one of the strongest terms of low abuse which the German language affords.

The notary alluded to in this uncomplimentary manner, naturally protested as a *persona nobilis ;* but Harneker cut all argument short by giving the order, "*Veniant darabanti et efferant ;*" and proceeded to fill up the vacant post by turning to the servant who stood behind his chair, and saying to him in German : "*Du Hansl geh' setz' Dich dort hin.*"

Szeged is at present a purely Magyar town, if we except a small community of Serbs, who seem to be fast dwindling away. I have heard of an original German nucleus, but do not know whether it ever existed or not. Certain it is that many persons in Szeged, who are now Magyars as far as their nationality is concerned, have German names, and are of German descent. These are, however, in most cases, perhaps in all, accretions, more or less recent immigrants, often not from Germany itself, but from some German colony in Hungary, and thus already more or

less magyarized before their arrival in Szeged. Like the other Royal Free Cities on the plain which have a Magyar population, Szeged differed from those in Northern Hungary, inasmuch as in the former the *polgármester* (*Bürgermeister*) was until 1848 inferior to the *főbiró* (*Hauptrichter*), whereas in the latter the position of these two magistrates was reversed. Since 1848 this distinction has been done away with, the cities on the Alföld being conformed to the model of the northern cities.

In the last chapter I had occasion to explain that a Royal Free City was considered in Hungarian law a *persona nobilis*. As such they often became feudal lords of peasant communities. Thus, Szeged was lord of the manor in two villages of the county of Csongrád, called respectively Tápé and Kis-Telek. The difference between the position before 1848 of the peasants in these villages and of the unprivileged inhabitants of the city itself, was characteristically stated to me as follows :—The latter might be beaten by the *kapitány* of the town, but not by the *szolgabiró* of the county*; on the contrary, the peasants of Tápé and Kis-Telek might be beaten by the *szolgabiró*, but not by the *kapitány* of the town.

These cities had little or none of that spirit of independence towards the Crown which the counties displayed. A Wohlfahrt was an exception. 'Nor, on the other hand, were they so much as might have

been expected nurseries of social equality. The Crown, in order to keep them in a position of subservience, had forced on them—perhaps nothing loath—illiberal constitutions. The great mass of the citizens were citizens only in name. The town was governed by a sort of self-electing college, called the *communitas*. Even this unpopular body was not entrusted by the *Concilium Locumtenentiæ* with an unreserved choice of their magistrates, in the appointment of which the Crown possessed a veto, nor with an uncontrolled disposal of the municipal funds. Citizenship, instead of being a source of political power or influence to those who possessed it, merely conferred certain personal privileges, valuable perhaps to the individual burgher, but of little consequence to the country at large.

While I was in Szeged, one of its great annual fairs was held on the plain just outside the town. I was told that it was not so fully attended as usual. The ravages of the cholera may have had something to do with it; but many of those who did come said that others stayed away because they had heard that the "enemy"—meaning the Prussians—were already in Szeged. What most struck me in the fair were the great precautions which it is considered necessary to take against the stealing of horses and horned cattle. The police magistrates of the town, or "captains," as they are called in Hungary, had temporary offices

set up in different parts of the fair, with the *pandurok* or mounted constabulary, and the *hajduk*,* a sort of *sergents de ville*, in attendance. There were also enclosures close by for impounding suspected animals. Whenever a bargain was made, the purchaser and the seller had both of them to appear at one of these offices. The latter produced the passport of the animal transferred, without which document it would not have been admitted to the fair, but would have been seized at once by the police. Such a document gives an accurate description of the animal it legitimates, and of the brands on him. The paper having been proved to be correct, a new passport is made out for him in the name of the purchaser, after which he is allowed to take his purchase away.

The Hungarian language has a word, *bitang*, to denote an animal strayed or stolen. Any one suspected of being such is seized by the authorities, and if the apparent owner cannot prove his right, it is kept in *bitangság* for a year, supposing the real owner does not come forward to claim it. During this period the *Concilium Locumtenentiæ* advertises it through the whole country, while the local authorities let it out for work to responsible persons who pay a certain sum for the use of it, and engage to make good

* *Hajduk* is the plural of *hajdu*, but has been erroneously taken by the Germans for a singular, from which they have formed a plural, *Heiducken*, our "heyducks."

any injury or loss. One of the "captains" at Szeged told me that one day he saw a man riding on a horse that seemed too good for him. He immediately had them seized on suspicion. The peasant produced a passport, duly signed by the captain of a neighbouring town, as they count neighbourhood on the Alföld, that is to say rather less than more than fifty miles off. Inquiries made at the latter place proved the passport to be genuine, but my friend's suspicions were not therefore disarmed. He made inquiries in another municipality as to the genuineness of the animal's previous passport; and again his suspicions did not receive the expected confirmation. Still not satisfied, he pushed his researches into the past history of the horse, and at last found a passport forged in the name of the judge of a distant village, with a fictitious name as that of the alleged vendor. There were three thieves concerned in the transaction, each living in a different district. Having first forged a passport to account for its being in the possession of one of them, they passed him on from one to the other, at each transfer obtaining a passport completely *en règle*, until the captain's persevering suspicions detected the whole triad of offenders.

Indeed horse-stealing seemed to be not the only form of thieving *en vogue* at Szeged. While there, I had, as a daily attendant, one of the *hajduk* of the town. He advised me to take care and fasten my

windows whenever I went out, as there were a great many thieves about. "Magyar thieves," he added, as if such were more to be feared than any others. By way of instance, he told me of a recent case in which they had robbed a cottager by digging a hole through his earth-built wall. This was one amongst several instances which reminded me of what I had read of the East. A similar mode of burglary is alluded to in the Old Testament, and very often in Hindu tales and dramas, while the Greeks had a special name for a robber of this sort, τοιχωρύχος. This hajdu had been an old soldier. His son, also a soldier, had been taken prisoner by the Prussians in Bohemia, and was one of those whom they succeeded in deluding into joining Klapka's corps. Poor fellow! it is to be hoped that he did not suffer in consequence of his foolishly giving heed to those Prussian tempters.

The neighbourhood of Szeged was one of the districts which suffered most severely from the drought of 1863. When I arrived there towards the latter end of July, 1866, no rain had fallen for two months. The pastures around the town were quite burnt up; scarcely a living blade of grass to be seen. Remembering the terrible stories I had heard about the famine at Szeged while spending the winter 1863-4 at Gödöllö and Pest, I inquired of the *polgármester* as to its effects upon the mortality of the population.

He, however, insisted that the statements published on the subject were very much exaggerated, and added that no one had died in consequence. Of course what he meant was, that he had not heard of any one dying directly of hunger, and he left out of calculation its indirect effects in the way of increased disease, &c. This *Gemüthlichkeit*, this optimism, which has its root in indolence, does more harm to all the peoples of the Austrian Empire, the Hungarians included, than anything else. What sort of a famine that really was may be understood from the fact that, without taking into consideration its effects on human life, health, and labour, or the fearful diminution in the number of the cattle, the value of the crops which failed was estimated at one hundred and twenty six millions of florins.

Although the drought of 1866 was not for a moment to be compared to that of 1863, it was yet sufficiently severe to cause the Government serious anxiety. Orders were sent down from the Council of Lieutenancy—there was as yet no Hungarian Ministry—to the local authorities, to make out lists of such persons as required assistance, whether in the form of delay in paying their taxes, of loans of money or of seed-corn, or of employment in public works. One of my friends, a member of the Town Council, had an outlying district of the vast territory of the town allotted to him for such conscription. I gladly

complied with his invitation to accompany him thither. Unfortunately, I became so ill as to be obliged to return to Szeged in a day or two, before he had completed his work. We started about five o'clock in the afternoon, and arrived about nine in the evening at the cottage of the peasant with whom we were to take up our quarters. Its only floor was composed of stamped earth, but it must not therefore be supposed that its occupant and owner was one of the indigent. The territory of Szeged is divided into twenty-two *kapitányság*, or "captaincies." Each captain has under him a number of *káplárok*, or "corporals." In the captaincy to which we were bound there were six such subordinate officers, of whom our peasant-host was one. Several *tanyák*, or summer dwellings for the cultivators, were grouped about the spot; so many, in fact, that they had built a chapel, and established a summer school for their children.

Although already very unwell, I was interested the next morning in observing the process of conscription, and regret that I could not wait until it was finished, or even make full notes of what I saw. Some idea may be formed of the little value of land in the Alföld from the fact that the limit of land possessed above which the holder was not entitled to Government assistance, was fixed at fifty Hungarian acres. And be it remembered that this was no large

scheme of relief to the landed interest, but merely a temporary measure, intended to preserve people from dying of hunger or sinking into hopeless pauperism. This relief, according to the circumstances of its recipient, was administered in the form of a money loan, a loan of seed-corn, or a term of credit from the tax-gatherer. Those who had no landed property, and lived from the labour of their hands, were enrolled separately, for the purpose of receiving during the winter, through the municipal authorities, money, food, fuel, &c. Claimants who had the same names, which was very often the case, were distinguished by the addition of the names of their wives. The Hungarian common law differs from the English in carefully preserving a woman's legal existence even after marriage. Thus one claimant stated that he had no land, and lived by the labour of his hands, but that his wife had nine acres.

In the preceding chapter I gave some figures relating to the great increase of taxation in Hungary within the last twenty years. Similar data might have been collected at Szeged. Thus, one citizen told me that he had paid as Government taxes on his land, in 1865, 1,150 florins; while before the revolution he had paid for the same property only forty-two florins.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MAGYAR PEASANT.

Definition of a Peasant—Pride of the Magyar Peasantry—*Extra Hungariam non est vita*—Non-Peasant Classes—A Horse-racing Agriculturalist—The Un-peasant-like Character of the Magyar Peasant—Dr. Ditz on Indolence—Causes of Hungarian Indolence—Doubtful Blessings of Nature—Cunning and Suspicion of the Peasant—Magyar Politeness—Subjection of Women—Patriarchal Relations—Hospitality—National Faults—Aristocratic Prejudices—Professor Ansted's *Oriental Blood*—Magyar and German Industry—M. Arany's *Magyar Misi*—A Peasant's use of Words.

As the true peasant type is rarely, if ever, to be found in England,—the "statesman" of Cumberland and Westmoreland is perhaps the nearest approach to it we have,—I am conscious of no little difficulty in conveying to an untravelled reader an adequate idea of a Hungarian peasant (*parasztt, Bauer*). He is not necessarily an owner nor even an occupier of land, but he is always a cultivator of land, either for himself or others, and looks forward to owning, or at least occupying, land as the possible future after which he strives, the ideal he seeks to realize. This

circumstance alone is sufficient to prevent the class from being pervaded with socialist notions, or even with the democratic idea that "all men are equal." A broad line of demarcation is drawn between those who own or occupy land on one side, and on the other those who live by their labour, either as cottagers or in the farmhouses of their employers, whether the latter are peasants or "gentlemen" (*urak*, *Herren*). In like manner there is a marked distinction between land-owning peasants who are themselves employers of labour and those who have so little land as to be obliged to eke out their subsistence by labouring for others for hire. Between these two classes are interposed those peasants who have just enough land to maintain themselves and their families without requiring the assistance, or supporting the expense, of hired labour.

These economic, or plutocratic,—whichever expression may be preferred,—distinctions of rank are intelligible to a foreign observer. I have been told, however, that there exist among the peasants of a Magyar village distinctions of rank which are independent of wealth, religion, or nationality. I have not personally investigated the truth of this statement, and therefore cannot say how far it is really founded on fact.

Still more decided is his pride of nationality. When asked what he is, he draws himself up to his

full height and with a characteristic mixture of pride and politeness answers, "*Kérem alássan, magyar vagyok;*" words which may be thus paraphrased, "I humbly beg permission to say that I am a Hungarian." The Magyar of the *Alföld* seldom emigrates, for he is himself pervaded with the sentiment which dictated the mediæval rhyme,—

Felix ergo Hungaria
Cui dona data sunt varia;

and the one still better known—

Extra Hungariam non est vita,
Et, si est vita, non est ita.

The peasant of the Alföld is fully persuaded that other countries do not afford their inhabitants enough to eat. This idea is perhaps not so absurd as it at first sight appears. At any rate it is easy to see how it arose. The population of that part of the country only now begins to recover from the devastations of the Turks, and the unwholesomeness which naturally attaches to a soil imperfectly drained and cultivated. So while the Magyar of the Alföld has never emigrated himself, he has seen a succession of colonists pouring in to fill up the vacuum, and yet there is room. He naturally concludes that the Serb, the Slovack, the Swabian, and the Wallach come from countries which, unlike his own, do not afford sufficient sustenance for their own inhabitants, while

his has enough and to spare. When, as in the terrible drought of 1863, he is forced by a temporary famine to go and work for hire in the mountains of Upper Hungary and Transylvania, he finds that the labouring classes there live much more poorly than he has been accustomed to do, and thus experience confirms his own *à priori* reasonings.

The exact meaning of the word "peasant" (*paraszt, Bauer*) may be more clearly apprehended by an enumeration of the classes to which this name could not be applied. First of all neither Jews nor Gypsies were peasants; the latter were certainly, the former in the opinion of many persons, below the rank of peasant. The remaining classes of the community were "noblemen," *honoratiores*," and "citizens" (*polgárok, Bürger*). I use the word "nobleman" (*nemes ember*) rather than "gentleman" or "lord" (*úr, Herr*), because the lowest class of hereditary electors who were destitute of high birth, wealth, and education, were certainly not "gentlemen" (*urak*), although it was not allowable to call them "peasants." It is only foreign travellers who have described this class as "peasant nobles," which in fact consisted of the descendants of "ennobled peasants" (*geadelte Bauern*). I shall have to speak more fully of this class when describing the constitution of Hungary before 1848. Were it not for this exception I should have spoken of the first of the non-peasant classes

as "gentlemen," meaning by that word the owners of landed estates of at least medium extent, possessed of some amount of conventional education and social position. "*Honoratiores*" was the name given before 1848 by a sort of aristocratic condescension to persons who were not "noble" by birth, but had become members of what were considered liberal professions, *e.g.* clergymen, physicians, surgeons, lawyers, civil engineers, &c. Lastly, the citizens or burghers of an independent municipality were not called "peasants," although it would be very difficult to say in what manner the condition of a large number of them differed from that of the peasants outside the civic boundaries.

In the mind of a Hungarian, at any rate of a Hungarian of the old school, the main point in any definition of the word "peasant" (*parasztt, Bauer*) is to observe that it cannot be applied to a "gentleman" or "lord" (*úr, Herr*). Whatever else may be confused or indefinite in Hungarian society, *as yet* we may safely say that there is no confusion between the ideas of "peasant" and "lord." What is simple is not gentle, what is gentle is not simple. I say "as yet" advisedly, because it is impossible to foresee what even the immediate future may bring forth in a country which changes so rapidly as the Hungary of the present day. One of the signs of the times is that the term *parasztt* is *officially* abolished.

There are now no more *parasztok* in the eye of the law.

A curious instance of this change and its consequences came under my notice while attending the races at Debreczin. One of the prizes at most of the races in Hungary, if not at all, is reserved for horses bred by peasants and ridden by them instead of professional jockeys. This was set down on the "correct card" for *földcsek*. *Földes* is an adjective of somewhat indefinite meaning, properly signifying "earthy." It is now made use of to obviate the necessity of employing the objectionable word *paraszt*. We may translate it by "agriculturalist." Just below the words "for *földesek*" was printed a notice that no horse would be allowed to run for that prize which had not been approved by the managing committee. This struck me as a very admirable piece of aristocratic arbitrariness, and I called the attention of a friend of mine, a member of the committee, to the clause. He at once, taking his eyeglass from his eye, began to state the reason why it was inserted. Having first explained, as I have attempted to do above, why the word *földesek* was used instead of *parasztok*, he went on to say, at the races at —— in the year 185--, a country gentleman had sent in a high-bred horse for this prize, ridden it himself, and won the race, alleging—what could not be disputed—that he was as much a *földes*, an "agriculturalist,"

as any of the other competitors. It was true, he said, that before the revolution he was *úr*, while they were *parasztok*; but since that time such unjust and unreasonable distinctions had been abolished, and there were now neither *parasztok* nor *urak*. He carried off the prize, and the clause which had attracted my notice was everywhere inserted to prevent the repetition of such a trick.

On my return from one of my visits to Hungary I travelled in the same railway-carriage with an intelligent Würtemberger who had been looking out for an opportunity of settling in the Austrian Empire. Speaking of the Magyar peasant, he said that he was more suspicious of his social superiors than the German peasant. I think some peculiarity in his experience must have led him to that conclusion. It certainly does not agree with what I myself have seen and heard on the subject. In the Banat especially, the "Schwab" is spoken of as extremely, not to say ridiculously, suspicious. Indeed, the Magyar peasant does not seem to me to be so decidedly a peasant as persons of the same class belonging to the other nationalities. For instance, neither the Saxons in Transylvania nor the Swabians in the Banat like to become domestic servants. This prejudice is shared by the Serbs. The class of domestic servants is almost wholly recruited from the Magyar race. So, too, the Magyar peasant shows greater readiness

to adopt new modes of cultivating the land than the German colonist. I was told in the county of Fehérvár (*Germ.* Stuhlweissenburg) that the Magyar farm-servants show most ambition and readiness in learning how to manage the newly-introduced agricultural machines. "Miska" * is an object worth looking at when he goes to church on the Sunday after his promotion to the sole charge of one of these new-fangled inventions, so radiant is he with gratified vanity. Both the German and Magyar peasant have sufficient self-conceit; but the conceit of the latter persuades him that he is equal to learning anything; that of the former that he is already in possession of the right way of doing things, to which he means to keep.

The indolence of the Hungarian peasant has been a stock subject of declamation for writers like the editor of *Murray's Handbook of Southern Germany*, who have had but little or no knowledge of the country. On this subject I cannot do better than quote a critic whose impartiality and opportunities of forming a correct judgment are unimpeachable,—Dr. Heinrich Ditz. "People complain of the indolence of the Hungarian peasant, and no one does so more than the Hungarian himself. We must confess

* *Miska*, "Mike," diminutive of *Mihály*, Michael. It is applied to the Magyar peasant much as "Paddy" is to the Irish, or "Sandie" to the Scotch.

that we have not found him more indolent than is the peasant in most parts of Germany. But then we do not call it indolence, if the peasant neglects to manure his land, as long as the advantages of doing so are not evident, nay, are even doubtful. Nor do we call it indolence if he bestows but a small amount of labour on his field, as long as the increase of produce is not commensurate with the increase of expense in increased labour. Still less do we call it indolence, if he keeps his old-fashioned wooden plough, as long as he cannot find in the neighbourhood a smith capable of repairing an iron plough when it gets out of order. As far as we have come into contact with the Hungarian peasant, we have found him a teachable, and even an energetic and laborious cultivator, of whom it may be reasonably expected that he will display sufficient force of will and perseverance to overcome the greatest obstacles. This we can especially say of the peasants in the purely Magyar county of Csongrád. We even found a rare degree of education amongst them. A small collection of books on agriculture is not seldom to be met with in the houses of the peasants of Vásárhely.* We have even heard Latin, — but no German, — spoken by them."

Beside the causes indicated in the above quotation

* Dr. Ditz means Hód-Mezö-Vásárhely (the Market-place of the Beaver's Meadow), in the county of Csongrád.

for such Hungarian indolence as may really exist, others may be detected by careful observation. Foremost among these come the barbarous relations between the proprietors and cultivators of the land which prevailed before 1848. A scarcely, if at all less, effectual cause in producing that indolence was the backward state of commerce and foreign trade, the isolation of the country from the rest of Europe, —the result partly of its geographical positions, partly of its past history, and itself the reason that those quasi-feudal relations lasted so long.

Dr. Ditz points out to us an additional cause of the carelessness and indolence of the Hungarian cultivator which, as far as I know, has not been noticed by any previous traveller, certainly not by any Englishman. As he rightly observes, an improved, — or, to use his own expression, a "more intensive,"—cultivation would be furthered rather by an increased certainty of a return than by an absolute increase of the return, its uncertainty remaining the same. "This, however, the Hungarian peasant does not as yet understand. He still rejoices more over the bounty of nature which he but too readily considers a blessing of Heaven, whereas it is often its curse, than over the blessings of his own labour which are always beneficial even when not embodied in the produce of his fields, as they tend to form energetic and industrious people." The fertil

the soil, combined with the uncertainty and extreme severity of the climate, gives agriculture a gambling character. The peasant is thus exposed to greater temptations to idleness than elsewhere. With scarcely any exertion on his part, a favourable season will bestow on him a crop far exceeding the expectations of the husbandman of less fertile countries; on the other hand, all the labour he may bestow on his fields may be rendered of no avail whatever by a few hours of frost or a few days of drought. Thus the nation loses a greater blessing than that of abundant crops, that of a population educated by the experience of life to strenuous industry.

I remarked above that we English do not know by home experience the peculiar character in so many other countries attributed to the peasant. Our so-called peasant, the agricultural labourer, differs from the Continental peasant in having no direct beneficiary interest in the land. Our farmer, again, is really a capitalist, who voluntarily engages in agriculture as a business. I do not say that we have not types closely approaching that of the Continental peasant, but they are seldom, if ever, coincident with it. In the East of Europe, on the contrary, persons of different countries, when conversing together, mutually assume that each of them is acquainted with that common peasant character of which, in spite of the less important differences of nationality,

every peasant is supposed to partake. I well remember a Polish gentleman referring to this assumed peasant character, common to all nations and tongues, as a sufficient explanation of the massacre of the Gallician landlords in 1846. In this point their conduct resembled that of the Wallach peasantry of Transylvania in 1849, or the Slovack peasantry of the north of Hungary in 1831. Yet I do not know any instance in recent times in which a Magyar peasantry have acted in a similar ferocious manner. At the same time, it must be admitted that certain main features of character are common to the peasant class on the Continent from the Atlantic to the Black Sea.

Of these features, the most conspicuous and the most generally diffused is a combination of cunning and suspicion, often disguised by an appearance of simplicity and even stupidity. This has been observed by several authors of the French peasant. In a recent work, entitled *Life in Russia*, edited by Mr. Henry Morley, the author speaks of the obtuseness and stupidity of the Russian peasant. A great deal of this is probably assumed in order to escape inquiries which he suspects will in some unknown way affect his position for the worse. In Hungary this character is attributed rather to the Schwab than to the Magyar. That it is not absent from the latter's composition may be inferred from a pr[illegible]

proverb current among his "noble" landlords, which said, "The mystery of the Trinity and the cunning of the Magyar peasant none have fathomed." With this aristocratic sentiment may be compared the bitter submission to irresistible destiny contained in the peasant's adage, *Az úr a pokolban is úr*, "A lord is a lord even in hell."

A curious instance of the peasant's cunning and suspicion fell under my notice. The Hungarian Scientific Association met in 1864 at Maros-Vásárhely, a primitive out-of-the-way town in Transylvania. An industrial exhibition was formed of the products, implements, and curiosities of the neighbourhood. The fact of this collection being made excited great suspicion among the peasantry, who thought that the Government had set on foot the inquiry with the design of increasing the taxes. To get at the truth of the matter, a Magyar peasant addressed the gentleman who had undertaken the task of collection with the words, "I also am a German (*én is német vagyok*). Would you, sir, be so good as to tell me why they are collecting all these things?" This anecdote not only illustrates the Magyar peasant's character, but also his use of the word *német*, "German." Of course he did not mean to say that he was a *German* either by race or language. He only meant to suggest that he too was an adherent of the Government, and might therefore, be safely trusted with its secrets.

In comparison with the German peasant the Magyar is distinguished by a certain politeness and courtesy both of language and behaviour which is perhaps not always free from a certain element of interested calculation. *Nagyságolni a tens urat,* "to call his Worship his Lordship," has become proverbial. I was once sitting in a doctor's ante-room, where a peasant was crouching over the stove, apparently suffering from the toothache. All of a sudden he roused himself, and turning towards me inquired what title he was to use when addressing the doctor: "Would *tens úr* be proper?" I smiled at the poor fellow's solicitude, as I assured him that such a style would fully satisfy the doctor's social claim. So too my peasant driver, on finding that I was a foreigner and an Englishman, apologized for having perhaps addressed me by an unsuitable title; "for," said he, "I have never driven an English gentleman before." This politeness of expression is, however, not confined to his intercourse with his social superiors. The Hungarian peasants address one another with the formulas *kegyelmed, kjcd,* and *kend,* which are all various ways of expressing "Thy Grace." If, however, the person addressed is decidedly inferior, either in age or position, the elder or superior uses *te,* "thou," when speaking to him. Characteristically enough the relation of a wife to her husband is regarded as involving that sort of inferiority. She addresses him

per *kend* and speaks of him as *wram*, "my lord;" while he addresses her per *te* and speaks of her as *feleségem*, "my consort." So, too, when walking along the road he generally goes first, while she follows behind. Rightly or wrongly the Magyar is supposed to be less under female control than the nations of Western Europe, or than the Schwab colonists in Hungary. A certain orientalism in his feelings towards the weaker sex is attributed to the Hungarian, which he shares with the Serb. In the Banat I was told that Swabian women beat their husbands, "which," said my informant, "a Hungarian wife never does, nor a Servian even in her dreams." The newly married wife, whose gossips press her with the delicate question, "Does your husband love you?" answers, "I do not know, for he has not yet beaten me." This oriental treatment of women is not confined to the peasant class. I have observed upon it more than once to persons of different grades of the upper and middle classes of society in Hungary, and of both sexes. Those who knew anything of foreign manners, especially of France and England, admitted the truth of my remarks, and one of them summed them up in Hungarian by saying, "The Magyar is brave (*vitéz*) but not chivalrous (*lovagias*)."

I was told that it is by no means uncommon for a rich Hungarian peasant to give his only child, when a daughter, in marriage to his servant. These rich

Magyar peasants on the Alföld are very often childless. It then not unfrequently happens that he buys a boy, the child of some poor wandering Slovack parents, and brings him up as his heir. A friend of mine, speaking of the life of the peasants of Szatmár, laid especial stress on the patriarchal relations between the employers of labour, themselves peasants, and their servants. In spite of the difference between them in respect of material wealth, they shared the same toils and the same recreations, ate at the same board, dressed in the same costume, and addressed one another as *édes gazdám*, "my sweet master," and *édes szolgám*, "my sweet servant."

The Magyar peasant is combative, and as fond of a "faction fight" as an Irishman himself, but his goodness of heart and generosity are universally acknowledged by all who have to do with him. On account of his hospitality the German soldiery prefer being quartered in a Magyar village rather than in one of their own nationality. On the other hand, as the Magyar, especially when a soldier, has a high idea of what is due to him, the Hungarian peasant prefers to have quartered upon him German soldiers, who are less exacting in their demands.

Two faults of the national character are readily admitted by the Magyars themselves — the more readily, perhaps, as they consider them intimately connected with their virtues. The principal feature

of the Hungarian character is a certain manly, honest pride, and self-respect. This, however, is apt to degenerate into an overweening confidence in himself, a contempt of his neighbours, and even a habit of boasting. Indeed, while in Hungary, Lord Chesterfield's warning to his son not to consider every braggart he met as necessarily devoid of courage, often recurred to my mind. Closely allied to this defect is an exaggerated love of display. A nation seldom fails to be aware of its own faults; this one, at any rate, is exactly hit off by the popular proverb, *Sallangos a magyar*, "the Hungarian is fond of trappings." In his actions the Magyar, to whatever class he may belong, is apt to attach too much importance to the effect they will produce on the eyes or imaginations of beholders. Characteristically enough the Magyar peasant does not say it is a good thing or a useful thing to know how to read and write or to speak foreign languages, but that it is a "fine" thing (*szép*).

His aristocratic feelings have certainly been prejudicial to his interests on one point at least. The Hungarian peasant has in general a prejudice against petty trade, which is not shared by the German colonists. The consequence is, that in almost every Magyar village the shopkeeper is a Jew, whereas in the Swabian villages he is generally a German. It seems to me, however, an unwarrantable assumption

to suppose, as many foreign writers on Hungary have done, that this is the result of any peculiarity of race. This prĕjudice has been held by many other people beside the Magyars in a certain stage of their social and economic development, for instance, by the Scotch Highlanders. On the other hand the citizens of Debreczin and Szeged have time immemorial been addicted to trade, yet they are as truly Magyars as any of the peasantry. Nor is the comparison between the Magyars and the German immigrants a fair one. The latter came into Hungary with all the habits, traditions, and ideas of a more highly civilized society, from a country which had been for centuries more favourable to industry and commerce than the one into which they immigrated. Only a partisan or a tyro in such matters would expect a less civilized peasantry to acquire the habits of the more civilized as an immediate consequence of mere local juxtaposition. What a peasant learns from his neighbours is the smaller and less important portion of the education of his life, the greater portion is acquired at the paternal hearth.

Nor was Professor Ansted right in asserting that a Hungarian's "Oriental blood" renders mining not to his taste. I have found him employed as a miner both in the salt mines of Transylvania, and in the lead and copper mines of Nagy-Bánya and its neighbourhood. The particular fact upon which the

Professor bases his assertion, *i.e.* that in a mine situated in a purely Magyar district, he found no Magyar miners, is easily explained by the fact that the population of the country is so sparse that the better class of peasants find equally remunerative and far more pleasant employment in cultivating the soil. Nor is the assertion that the Magyar is peculiarly averse to laborious occupations in the towns founded on fact, as any one will find who takes the trouble to inquire into the nationality of the workmen employed in the docks of Old Buda, or in any other of the few factories to be found in Hungary. Not many years ago two large landed proprietors in the Banat, both of whose family names indicated a Servian origin, made a bet as to whether twelve Magyars or twelve Swabians would do an equal piece of reaping in the shortest time. The backer of the Magyars won the wager. The difference between these two races, considered as workmen, is said by Dr. Ditz to coincide with the result of this reaping-match. The Magyar, not being animated by a desire for gain to the same extent as the German or the Slovack, does not spend so large a proportion of his time in work as they do, and may therefore be generally supposed to effect and produce less. When, however, he does work it is with a will, and partly from a sense of honour, partly from a compound of pride and vanity, he willingly sacrifices

his time and strength for the benefit of his employer, as he does not like to turn out any work ill-done. It is, therefore, more profitable to engage a German or a Slovack by the day and a Magyar by the piece. The latter has no objection to idleness; and can, to use a German expression, lie for weeks and months on the bearskin; when, however, he must, he can display almost superhuman energy.*

I shall conclude this chapter on the character of the Magyar peasant by a translation of a short poem of a Hungarian poet, M. Arany. This sketch, half satirical and wholly sympathetic, was written in the year 1852, and the concluding words refer to the catastrophe of 1849. Tur, referred to in the first verse, is a village on the banks of the Tisza, where a peasant head-dress was made. The *Roarer* referred to in the fourth verse, is meant to be the name of a *csárda*, or public-house. The "humanity" referred to is a piece of Hungarian slang for "credit." Misi, or Miska, as has been previously noticed, is the representative name of the Hungarian peasant, whom our author thus describes:—

"MAGYAR MISI.

"Magyar Misi, to be sure, is the lad at once upon his feet, especially when he twists up his moustache with his saliva, and cocks on one side his cap from

* Die ungarische Landwirthschaft, S. 144.

Tur, with a crane's feather in it; presently all the women servants will go mad after him.

"On every finger Magyar Misi has a yellow ring, on every finger a sweetheart, and yet he is not bored; if he feels bored, the false one leaves them in the lurch: 'Choose, my darling, one handsomer and better than me.'

"If his faithful sweetheart deceives Magyar Misi, he is not such a fool as to drown himself in the water on her account: 'May the three Gods smite her,' is all he wishes, and in his great grief he sends after her but one curse.

"He looks into the 'Roarer' to get something to drink, where he finds humanity as long as his money lasts, but when his credit is exhausted he begins to command; Iczig the Jew gives himself trouble, if he frightens him.

"He forces his wine upon everybody, whether they want it or not: he even pledges the passers-by in the street; but woe to him who thereafter does not drink of it; he is lucky if they do not have to take him home in a wet sheet.

"'Who is the lad in the *csárda?*' cries out Misi. He loves to be ever showing himself and his strength; otherwise he is a blessed fellow, nor hurts even a fly; but do not attempt to touch his honour.

"What his heart feels and his tongue says are one; any fool may deceive and cheat him. He would

strike thee dead shouldst thou take from him a flint stone, but for one word he will give you the handsomest of his horses.

"He has as much sense as anybody, and might have learnt, but thought to himself, 'Why? not every one can become a parson.' Thus he argued: 'There are so many learned men amongst us already, that not the half of them are wanted.

"To see the world, to gather experience, he does not go far: at the furthest, to the fairs to buy a young cow; for he has inherited enough property from his father to live on,—beside land as much as requires three measures of seed, the common pasture.

"Like quick fire work goes on under his hand, but he rather prefers to stretch himself at his ease under the brown shade; nor does he therefore work because he perchance likes it, but merely that his conscience should not trouble him.

"To be a soldier, to go to the wars, he has no desire, but if they have once enlisted him he has certainly no equal. 'Sir captain,' he cries, in his Magyar-Miska way, 'let us cut them all down, and go home, I humbly pray you.'

"One word for a hundred. Magyar Misi is an excellent fellow; the only pity is that he himself very much believes it. Nor is philosophy wanting to him; for he very well knows how now and then to philosophize . . . . especially after misfortune."

As a further contribution to our knowledge of peasant life and ways of thought, I may here give one or two instances of a peculiar use of words by the Magyar peasant. By the word *szabadság* (liberty, privilege) he understands a fair or market open to the whole country; by *igazság* (justice), a passport; by *jószág* (property), draught cattle; by *élet* (life), wheat and maize; and lastly, and most characteristically of all, by *haza* (one's country, fatherland), the village in which he was born. A fellow Magyar he addresses as *pajtás* (comrade); a German as *sogor* (brother-in-law); a Slovack as *földi* (fellow-countryman); and a Jew as *szomszéd* (neighbour). I, as an Englishman, a sub-division of the class German, have been spoken of as *angol sogorunk*, "our English brother-in-law."

CHAPTER IX.

THE MAGYAR PEASANT—Continued.

The Alföld the Special Habitat of the Magyar—Appearance of their Villages—Proximity of the Churches—Spurious Ethnology—The Cottage of the Magyar Peasant—Of the Magyar Squire—Shortness of Peasant Life—Alleged Sterility—Magyars and Wallachs compared—Magyar Recruits—Costume of the Peasant—Of the Gentry—Of the Peasant Women—Rationale of Peasant Costume and Modern Fashion—Costume of Kalota-szeg—Of the less civilized Nationalities—Linen and Sheepskin—Holiday Dress—The Magyar as a Horseman—The Csárdás—The Gipsies—As Musicians—Their Hungarian Feelings—The Tilinka—Garibongyi—Four Classes of Herdsmen—Magyar Melancholy—German Vulgarity.

THE especial home of the Magyar peasant, the part of the country where he can be best studied, is undoubtedly the Alföld. At the time of their conquest of the country, which has since borne their name, the Hungarians were a horde of pastoral nomads. As such, they naturally fixed their first settlements along the banks of the great rivers, the Duna and the Tisza. The Kuns or Cumans, a kindred people, were subsequently settled not far from the latter stream, and in great measure between

the two. Even in Pannonia, the south-western quarter of the country, where German and Magyar villages are interspersed, it will generally be found that the villages on the plain belong to the latter, those on the hills to the former nationality. To the rule that the Magyar is an inhabitant of level, treeless wildernesses, the dwellers in the extensive forests of Somogy and Zala, the two counties which form the south-western corner of the country between Styria and Croatia, form an exception. A more notable one is afforded by the Székels in the extreme east of Transylvania. The following observations on the Magyar peasant's life have more especial reference to the Alföld.

One traveller after another has explained the peculiar character of Magyar villages, indeed, of Magyar towns also, by a reference to the nomad habits of the Hungarians on their first entry into the country. The Hungarian village, says M. de Gérando, is merely the camp of a nomad horde become permanent. Cottages have replaced tents, which, however, in form they still resemble. A space is still left between each cottage, as formerly between each tent. The streets are still left large, open, unpaved, as befits the streets of a camp of light horsemen.

The middle of the village is occupied by the green or square, where mud and dust too often supply the place of grass, which does not on those

arid plains display the same capacity for growing under difficulties as with us. By the side of this open space stands the church; in many villages, indeed, two churches, one Catholic, the other Protestant. The extreme toleration of Hungarian society on religious matters may be considered to be symbolized by the close proximity in which the two churches are generally placed. Sometimes they are so near that the somewhat Puritanical psalm-singing of the sturdy Protestants mingles rather discordantly with the plain song of the priest and his acolytes.

M. de Gérando's description of a Magyar village and its inhabitants is the most spirited and lifelike which I have read. It is, therefore, a pity that he should have marred it by a piece of spurious ethnology at the end. He is speaking of the striking want of trees in their villages situated in the plain, and says that "the Hungarian seems to have brought with him from Asia the hereditary hatred of the Orientals for trees." On reading this, one asks with some surprise, Have the Orientals a hatred for trees? if so, What Orientals? and lastly, Can a hatred for trees become an hereditary quality? The Székels of Transylvania, who are undoubtedly of the same blood as the Magyars, are one of the most forest-loving people in Europe. When will people have the good sense to leave off explaining by a reference to "blood" why one man plants trees, and another cuts

them down; why one man makes good coffee, and another indifferent;* why one man delves in a mine, and another follows the plough?

In the Magyar village every cottage is situated on one side of a small court, yard, or garden. This garden is separated from the road by a fence, which is in most places made of wood, sometimes of reeds, but very seldom is a quickset-hedge. The gable-end of the cottage is, as a rule, turned to the road, and pierced with one or two small windows. Underneath the latter is placed a wooden bench, a pleasant seat for gossip in summer evenings, whence it has acquired the significant name of *szóhordó*, "bearer of words." Above the window or windows are pierced one or two small round holes, which afford light and air to the loft that serves as a store-room. The traveller will observe some heads of maize of the last harvest stuck in the holes, and sometimes accompanied by the sickle which has reaped them. I could not learn why these objects are always placed there, but have been told that they are connected with some superstitious feeling. When a Hungarian peasant has a larger house than ordinary, it very often consists of two distinct portions, one on each side of the yard, and connected by a lofty arched gateway. The roof is generally high, yet its slope is the reverse of

* As Professor Ansted does in *A Short Trip in Hungary and Transylvania*, p. 4.

steep. Where not thatched with straw or reeds, the housetop is generally covered with regular splinters or shingles of wood, that of the fir being preferred. Tiles also are not uncommon in the towns, but slates are scarcely known. The eaves overhang very far, and afford shelter to a sort of brick terrace, which enables the inmates to walk along the whole length of their cottage, sometimes all round it, without sinking in the mud of the courtyard. The Magyars are even more given to whitewash than the Welsh themselves, and this practice has been seriously adduced as a proof of their affinity with certain tribes in the Caucasus. When the cottager is well off, the way in which he publishes his prosperity to the world is often by painting portions of his house over the whitewash. The colours preferred are green, blue, or dark red. The contrast between them and the white ground certainly is somewhat glaring, but the effect is not unpleasing.

I have tried to give a description of the cottage of a Magyar peasant on the Alföld, but on reading over what I have written, I find that much is common to the other races in other parts of the country, nay, even to persons superior to him in rank. The traveller may expect to find many a count and baron in a house which, as far as outward features are concerned, is built on entirely the same plan as the simplest cottage. The walls are higher and more

solid, the house is broader, the rooms are more in number, and withal more spacious, and the low narrow brick terrace has expanded into a roomy sheltered corridor; but this is all the difference as far as plan is concerned. The house of the *Nagyságos úr* (his lordship) has whitewashed walls, is tiled (if I may use the expression) with wooden shingles, and is utterly guiltless of staircases. Nevertheless comfort, elegance, and even luxury may be found on its ground-floor, nor do I ever remember to have had any longing to go up higher, when enjoying his abundant hospitality.

In the course of my travels both in Transylvania and on the Great Plain, I have more than once been housed in the cottages of the peasantry. The Magyar peasant, even when comparatively well off, is given to sleeping with the whole or the greater part of his family in one room, while he reserves the rest of the house for living in during the day, or even keeps it empty as a best room in which to stow away guests and receive company. In this respect he resembles the peasantry in other lands and of other races. Mr. Boner, in alluding to similar arrangement in the domestic economy of the Saxon peasantry of Transylvania, cites Hugh Miller to prove the existence of the same thing in Scotland. Another defect of these cottages is that the floors are, as a rule, made of stamped earth. Where wood is so scarce as it

is on the Alföld, it were perhaps unreasonable to expect them to be boarded, but these earthern floors may be reckoned one of the many ill influences which shorten the lives of the Alföld peasantry, and especially of their children.

It is very common to hear it asserted that the Magyar race is naturally sterile. Characteristically enough this is made by many a subject for boasting. My notice was first called to the alleged fact by a medical gentleman whom I afterwards discovered to be of Israelitish descent. He compared the Magyar mother to the noble lioness of fable which produces but one cub in a lifetime. As he proclaimed sterility a sign of nobility, I told him that the English were one of the most prolific of European nations, and maliciously enjoyed his consequent embarrassment. M. de Gérando in like manner writes: "Deux enfants, trois au plus, déjà bottés et éperonnés, jouent près du foyer. Le Hongrois ne trouve pas digne de lui de remplir sa maison de marmots, comme l'Esclavon ou le Valaque. La noble jument n'a par an qu'un poulain; c'est l'ignoble truie qui met bas une multitude de petits."

My own opinion is that no such sterility of the Magyar race has been proved. One of my principal reasons for doubting the fact is that the Székels of Transylvania have notoriously large families, and are yet acknowledged to be of pure Magyar blood.

This fact directs us to look to climate rather than to race for an explanation of the phenomenon of small families on the Great Plain. This is assuming that fewer children are born to Magyar parents on the Alföld than elsewhere; which, in the present state of Hungarian statistics, is by no means so clearly made out. Other causes tend to keep down the population. A country squire in the county of Bihar, told me that the present population of his village is about 1,000, and that the registers of the Calvinists prove that it was the same a hundred years ago. He said that from time to time the dysentery appears as an epidemic amongst the children, and carries off great numbers of them. Of eighty women he reckoned from forty-eight to fifty to be widows, whose husbands have died of hard work, exposure, and too free indulgence in wine. The habit of sleeping on the ground and in the open air during the summer months brings on early rheumatism and early old age. It may have been my own fault, but I certainly could not see that the teachers of the Magyar peasant had ever enlightened him on these points. He considers it manly and Hungarian not to take overmuch care of his health. It has often struck me that Protestantism commended itself to the Magyars as being a rebellion against authority and restraint. Comparing himself with the orthodox Wallach, the evangelical Magyar is proud of belonging to a religion

that does not enjoin fasting. But where the two races come in contact, numerical superiority—in the long run the surest superiority of all—declares itself on the side of the more abstemious nationality. Contented with little, keeping with scrupulous rigour the long, severe, and oft-recurring fasts of the Oriental Church, the Wallach does not shorten his life by over-exertion for the sake of those comforts which the Magyar already considers necessaries. In Transylvania the Wallach is longer-lived than the Magyar, and the Magyar than the equally laborious and more parsimonious Saxon.

While on the subject of the physical condition of the Magyars, I may mention that an official, who had served during the administration of Bach, and had had the best opportunities of ascertaining the truth on this point, told me that, wherever the Magyar nationality was mixed up in the same recruiting district with others, it suffered proportionally more from the military conscription than they did. A smaller per-centage of Magyar recruits are rejected as unfit for service.

On working days the Magyar peasant wears a short linen shirt, coming down only to the waist, whose scantiness in the body contrasts strangely with the long loose sleeves, which are as large as those of a surplice. Such at least is the case when the old national costume is fully kept up; but many of the

peasantry have begun to wear shirt-sleeves of more moderate dimensions. The shirt is not buttoned at the throat and wrists, but tied. His nether limbs are covered by a pair of very wide linen trousers, or rather drawers, which descend but a little way below the knees, and are tied tightly round the waist. This garment is, in fact, what is called in India *pyjama*. Its Hungarian name is *gatya*, which word is also used by the Germans in the country in the collocation *gatya-Hosen*. These drawers are worn by all classes of the community, both by night and by day. As the shirt only just comes down to where the *gatya* begins, the wearer, when he stoops, is apt to expose a narrow circle of bare skin, embrowned by the rays of the summer sun. Below the *gatya*, which is often ornamented with fringes, appear the *csizmák* or high boots, reaching almost to the knee. The poorer peasant, however, not unseldom works barefoot, and reserves his *csizmák* for high days and holidays. His head is covered by a felt hat, either provided with a very broad slouching brim, or else of a shape resembling those which we nickname "pork-pies."

The work-day costume of the peasant, which I have just described, is, so to say, the foundation of every Hungarian's dress. It is true that the gentlemen have curtailed the loose flowing shirt-sleeve to more civilized dimensions, but the *gatya* is always

retained. Over this, well-to-do peasants on holidays —persons above the rank of peasants always—wear tight-fitting pantaloons, which go inside the boot, and are held down by straps under the feet. Braces are never used. Indeed, I believe that a genuine Magyar holds them in abhorrence, as a symbol of Germanism. At any rate, in the caricatures of the German centralist, which I used to see continually in the Hungarian comic papers, he is almost always drawn with his coat off, so as to show his braces to their greatest extent, as if they were as essential a characteristic of him as thin legs, flat feet, a pot-belly, and a fatuous close-shaven face. In their stead the Hungarian wears a narrow leathern belt or strap, which he seems to draw very tight, much tighter, I used often to think, than conduced either to his comfort or his health.

Just as in France the *blouse* is considered the sign of a certain rank, so in Hungary any one belonging to a class superior to the peasant is shortly described as *nadrágos ember*, *i.e.* one who habitually wears the *nadrág* or trousers over the *gatya*, also as *kabatos ember*, or one wearing a coat. So, too, from the blue jackets worn by the peasantry in certain districts, a man is defined to be a peasant by calling him *kékbeli ember*, "a man in blue."

The costume of the Magyar peasant-women is so much more complicated than that of the men that it

is not so easy to describe it fully, or to state in what points it agrees or differs from that of the women of other classes and other countries. Some few points may, however, be referred to here. One is the very common use of a handkerchief passed round the neck, and then crossed over the bosom, and finally tied behind the waist. This sometimes serves as a substitute for a bodice, sometimes is worn over one as an additional protection against the weather. Like the men, the Hungarian peasant-women recognize no medium between high boots and bare feet and legs. Their boots are often ornamented by the sides being made of red leather. Married and unmarried women are chiefly distinguished by their head-dresses. The latter go bare-headed, even under the hottest summer sun, and seldom wear, even in the depth of winter, any covering over their hair, which is all drawn back behind the ears, and twisted into a single plait, hanging down the back, its length being continued by long streamers of ribbons reaching as low as the knees. The married women, on the contrary, always wear their hair carefully covered with a handkerchief, or, in the richer classes, mark their position by a sort of cap or hood at the back of head.

The description here given of the Magyar peasant's costume states roughly, without going into provincial details, the general features of that which prevails over the greater part of the country. I ought, how-

ever, to observe that his costume varies very considerably according to the locality. In the western counties of Hungary it bears marks of German influence; on the eastern frontiers of Transylvania it has a still more decidedly Wallach character. Peasant costume in general, but more especially female peasant costume, is a very complicated subject, on which it is hazardous to dogmatize hastily, or make very general assertions. In this respect it resembles ladies' fashions. Indeed there is a curious relation of antithesis between the two. The true peasant-woman's costume remains permanent from generation to generation, but varies from village to village; the fashions of great ladies vary from month to month, but each in its turn extends its despotic sway from Moscow to St. Louis. Nor are they mere forms without meaning. The one not obscurely typifies the narrow prejudiced patriotism and obstinate unreasoning conservatism of more barbarous times; the other as clearly represents the restless yearning after excitement and absence of independent individuality which characterize the civilization of these latter days. Formerly men slavishly followed their forefathers, now they as irrationally imitate their neighbours.

Tourists are for the most part given to sentimentality on the subject of peasant-girls' costumes. For my own part I must say that they seem to be generally irrational and arbitrary ways of making their wearers

look grotesque and inelegant. Where, however, there are so many varieties, some, of course, must be pleasing. I believe that the finest specimens of true Magyar costumes are to be found in the *Jászság* or Jazygia, a part of the country which I have not seen. The most peculiar costumes which I have found worn by Magyars have been in Transylvania, but, as I observed above, these have more or less a Wallach character. I may instance that worn in the Kalota-szeg. *Szeg* is a Hungarian word meaning comer. The district consists of sixteen villages grouped around Bánffy-Hunyad, half-way between Nagy-Várad (Gross-Wardein) and Kolozsvár (Klausenburg). It takes its name from a brook named Kalota, a tributary of the Sebes Körös, or "Swift Körös," the most northerly of the three rivers of that name, which flow westward out of Transylvania into Hungary. Kalota-szeg is an isolated group of villages almost purely Magyar in the midst of a Wallach population. What we see of the female costume of Kalota-szeg is as follows: A loose white shift or rather wrapper, fitting closely round the throat and descending nearly to the ankles, is gracefully drawn in at the waist by the same string which supports a white petticoat and an apron of dark stuff ornamented with a coloured border. The sleeves of the white shift are full and come down just below the elbow, above which they are pushed when the arm is required to be free. They are worked with one or

two thin lines of red or blue worsted about the shoulders, the arms, and round the neck. Those learned in peasant costumes pointed out to me that they were not worked closely over the bosom with worsted stripes as are the corresponding garments of the Wallach women in their neighbourhood. In the complete costume a dark over petticoat or skirt, with a broad coloured border of blue, yellow, green, or red, is worn over the white under-petticoat. The skirt is turned up in front under the apron in such a way that the coloured border falls at a slight angle from the waist towards the heel. The contrasted colours of the borders of the apron and the skirt indicate the village of the district to which the wearer belongs. The boots are of soft leather and of the shape we call half Wellingtons, sometimes black, sometimes of a bright red. The head is covered, if at all, with a handkerchief bound round the brows and knotted at the back. The hair is gathered into plaits behind and hangs down the back, tied with many-coloured ribbons which reach to the knees.

This costume made the more vivid impression on my mind as I first saw it under peculiarly favourable circumstances. It was on a fine summer afternoon when the newly-elected Bishop of the Reformed Church of Transylvania made a sort of triumphal entry into Bánffy-Hunyad to hold there the annual synod of that church. On such a festal occasion the

virgins of the village town were decked out with their *pártas*, an ornament which has the same significance as the Scotch snood. It is a sort of crown, made of cardboard tied in a circle at the back of the head, where it is cut thinner than over the forehead. The cardboard is covered so thick with false pearls as not to be seen at all from the outside. On account of the meaning attached to the *párta*, a girl who goes to Kolozsvár as a domestic servant is not allowed to wear it, as she is there removed from the keen-eyed supervision of her fellow villagers. Some of the clergy, who had come to the synod, told me that if a young man met a servant-girl from his own village wearing this ornament in the streets of Kolozsvár, he would at once tear it off her head.

In Hungary proper—at any rate in the central parts of the country with which I am best acquainted, the neighbourhood of the capital, about Szeged, Debreczin, and Miskolcz—the Magyar peasant-women make their own clothes, but from materials bought in the shops. In this respect they agree with the German peasant-women, and differ from the Wallachs, Serbs, and Bulgarians, who spin, weave, and dye the stuffs of wool, silk, and linen, of which their own clothes and those of their husbands are made. This circumstance explains why the costumes of the Magyar peasantry are less interesting than those of the "nationalities." The Magyars are, in fact, more

civilized, and therefore less picturesque. No doubt, in this age of railways, the other nationalities will soon begin to imitate them, and the old costumes will die out. It were much to be wished that before their disappearance some artist were to select the most picturesque. An English painter would find much in the South of Hungary and Transylvania of interest for his art. Certainly I myself never saw anything more effective than the gala dresses of the Bulgarian colonists of Brestje, a *prædium* belonging to the Crown, and not far from Temesvár.

In cold weather both sexes wear a jacket of sheepskin, with the wool in the inside. It is called *ködmöny*. On the outside the skin is generally embroidered with silk or thread in bright colours. The other great defence against the bitter cold of winter is the *bunda*, or pelisse, of sheepskin, reaching from the throat to the ankles. Its cumbrous weight is alluded to in the proverb, *Alszik mint a bunda*, "He sleeps like a pelisse," to describe unusually deep slumber. This most solid of garments is, as Mr. Paget well says, to the Hungarian shepherd, his house, his bed, his all. He shelters himself in it not only against the frosts of winter, but also against the heat of the summer noon. As you see the flock going out to the pastures in the morning, you will observe a solitary ass in the midst. He carries the shepherd's provision for the day, and his *bunda* strapped on his

back. In the chilly evening he returns unloaded. The black bread and bacon has been eaten, and his master prefers now to carry the pelisse on his own back.

This costume of linen and sheepskin, of the coolest and warmest materials, is exactly suited to the extreme character of the climate, where the shepherd, like Jacob in Padan-Aram, suffers within the same twenty-four hours from the heat by day and the frost by night. Still, I think that the peasantry in Hungary show much greater hardiness in enduring the inclemencies of the weather than our English labourers could exhibit. Many of them seem to wear clothes merely for decency or for ostentation, rather than for warmth. I have often seen two peasants engaged together in exactly the same work: the one lightly clad in a coarse linen shirt, while the other has over his his *ködmöny*, with the woolly side turned inwards. The same peasant who works the whole week through barefoot, in a linen shirt and loose linen drawers, comes out on Sunday to dance vigorously in Hungarian boots, tight pantaloons of blue cloth, and a sort of spencer or jacket of the same warm material. So, too, a young peasant, who volunteered to act as my guide through a Transylvanian forest, put over the clothes in which he was working in his cottage, a jacket, a pair of trousers, and a pair of boots, although he could have walked much better as he was. But then he would

not have presented so respectable an appearance before the "foreigners," *i.e.*, the inhabitants of the village the other side of the forest.

It is on Sundays and saints' days when he comes out to dance that the Magyar peasant is to be seen in his glory. Even when he does not put on his cloth jacket and his pantaloons, his shirt and *gatya* have been newly washed, and are still bright and clean. As his working clothes are of linen, it makes a great difference in his appearance on what day of the week you chance to see him. On the weekly feast-day the young *bctyár** decorates his hat with a bunch of fresh flowers, or with the white filaments of a plant known in Hungary by the poetical name, *árva leány haja*, "the orphan girl's hair." The heels of his *csizmák* are in most cases armed with spurs. He marks the time, and withal animates himself to greater exertions by clashing these together. Indeed, I have often seen him thus console himself, when, from want of a partner or any other cause, he is debarred from the enjoyment of the dance, while listening to the stirring sounds of some gypsy or Bohemian band.

Lóra termett a magyar, "the Hungarian is born on horseback," is one of those proverbs which by dint of repetition gain belief even from those who ought best to know their falsity. It flatters a certain vain

* Peasant dandy.

sentimentalism on the part of many Hungarians and philo-magyar foreigners, who think that to admit that Hungarians are not remarkably good riders would be to confess a grievous degeneracy from those horse-archers whose Parthian tactics perplexed on many a bloody field the Italian and German successors of Charlemagne. But the truth must be told. Of the middle classes, whether commercial or professional, a much smaller proportion can really ride than is the case in England. Of course these remarks do not apply to the aristocracy, nor to those who have served as officers in the Austrian army. As for the peasantry, there is undoubtedly a large class, who devote themselves to the breeding of colts. Their habits and achievements do read more like those of the Gauchos of South America than any European people. But outside that class I have not seen anything to make me think that the Hungarian peasant is necessarily a born horseman. Indeed, I never saw in any Hungarian neighbourhood so many persons on horseback as in a purely German district of Transylvania. As for their Hunnish descent, that is sufficiently vindicated by this constant use of the *szekér* or light waggon, probably much the same as those with which Attila barricaded his camp after the indecisive carnage on the Catalaunian Plain.

I was always glad to look on at a peasant-dance, because there, if anywhere, one might be sure that

people were really enjoying themselves and not merely pretending to do so. Ceremony is, of course, reduced to a minimum. Even youth and beauty command but scant pre-eminence. All that is wanted is ability and willingness to dance; everything else is merely accessory. Indeed, I have often been struck with the age and ugliness of many of the women who seemed to dance most. But they have always a most unflagging energy, and execute the most elaborate pantomime, no matter how contracted may be the space in which they have to move. I have seen a couple dance in the porch of a priest's house, in which porch there seemed barely room for the spectators who crowded thither to listen to the gypsies playing indoors. Again, I could not but smile as on a winter's evening I watched in the close hot room of a village a sturdy boy of sixteen or seventeen dancing with his venerable mother as a partner. He could not have exerted himself more if he had had to whirl round the belle of the county. Even among the class above the peasantry, a looker-on will be amused by many eccentricities. I have, for instance, seen several turns of the pantomimic *csárdás* danced by a trio instead of a couple. Sometimes it is the cavalier who is daring enough to undertake to act as partner to two ladies at once, but more often an elderly gentleman assumes the character of papa blessing the young couple, with whom he whirls round as if

they were but a single person—a sort of corporate partner.

As far as I have seen, the genuine Magyar peasant never dances anything else than the *csárdás*, but the style of its execution varies in different districts, and it contains so much variety that it never produces a sensation of sameness. Its name is the adjective form from *csárda*, which designates a solitary public-house; an institution which plays a considerable part in all romantic poems or romantic novels, whose scene is laid in Hungary, as a fitting haunt for brigands, horse-thieves, gypsies, Jews, political refugees, strolling players, vagabond poets, and other melodramatic personages. The music of the *csárdás* is at first slow, solemn, I may say melancholy. After a few bars it becomes livelier, which character it then keeps up, occasionally becoming very fast indeed, and at last ends in a delirious whirl of confusion. The movements, of course, correspond. The dance opens with a stately promenade; then, as the music quickens, each couple take a twirl or two, and breaking away brusquely from one another, continue a series of pantomimic movements, now approaching coquettishly, like parted lovers desiring reconciliation, then, as if the lady thought that she had given sufficient encouragement, she retreats with rapid but measured steps, while her partner pursues, and gradually gaining on

her again seizes her waist; they whirl swiftly round two or three times, and then breaking away, recommence the pantomime as before. What makes the *csárdás* unrivalled as a spectacle is its variety. One seldom sees two couples performing exactly the same figure at the same time. While two separated partners are doing their steps with their backs turned on one another, another couple between them are spinning round in the ecstasies of reunion.

This dance is a peasant's dance, yet I do not know that I have ever seen it danced better or with more spirit than in middle-class circles in the country. Since the policy taken up by the Viennese Government after the revolutionary war drove the greater part of the Hungarian aristocracy into opposition to the court, this dance has been admitted into the balls of the *haute volée* at Pest. But like other European aristocracies, the Hungarian is too denationalized and too self-conscious to surrender itself wholly to the enthusiasm which is the soul of this dance. Well as the countesses and baronesses dance, one misses in their *csárdás* the *abandon* of the wives and daughters of their stewards and attornies. A lady who had been educated at Vienna said to me, "*Je n'aime pas le* csárdás; *pour le danser bien il faut être très-coquette.*"

But it would be indeed inexcusable were I here to omit to notice the musicians, upon whom so much

of the Hungarian's enjoyment depends. In Hungary "no amusement without the gypsy" has passed into a proverb. In some of the principal balls of the carnival at Pest, where the *csárdás* alternates with dances of more European celebrity, two bands are provided, one of Bohemians, the other of gypsies. As long as it was a question of quadrilles, waltzes, &c., the Tchekhs were the performers; but as often as the turn of the *csárdás* came round they remained quiet, and the music was given by the swarthy children of India.

The Magyar peasant, it is said, considers the art of the musician, at any rate of the fiddler, as servile and beneath his dignity. The herdsmen and shepherds, it is true, play the *tilinka*, a sort of flageolet. In certain hilly neighbourhoods a long horn of bark, resembling that used by the Swiss mountaineers, is sounded by the herdsmen, but this is rather a Wallach than a Magyar instrument. Fiddling, however, is too professional. That he leaves to the gypsy. Those persons in Hungary who, like the abolitionists of Old and New England, refuse to believe in any real inferiority on the part of the lower races of man, regard the gypsy with the same sort of indignant pity which elsewhere attaches itself to the negro. These sentimentalists represent the ragged gypsy father exhorting his naked offspring to practise with unremitting diligence on the fiddle; "for only thus,

my children, can we induce men to treat us as their fellow-creatures." That this is merely a fancy picture is evident to any one not blinded by philanthropic prejudices. The gypsy is attached to his peculiar life, and does not care to gain social respectability on condition of giving it up. The experiment of weaning them from their vagabond habits has been tried over and over again by philanthropists in all parts of the country, and notably by the Emperor Joseph II. I do not say that these attempts have met with no success at all, but certainly with much less than so much energy and good intentions deserved. Nevertheless there are many settlements of stationary gypsies in Hungary and still more in Transylvania. These "new peasants," as they were called when first reclaimed from vagabondage by Joseph II., are almost always the poorest, the worst clad, the worst fed, and the worst housed of all the inhabitants of their town or village. In the Hungarian language the gypsy is called *czigány*. The habits of these peculiar people are much the same in Hungary as in England, except that the former country, being less thickly populated, is more favourable to their existence. They are not only thieves and fortune-tellers, but also smiths, farriers, and horse-dealers. In certain parts of the country they wash gold out of the auriferous streams of the Eastern Carpathians. A curious consequence of their practising the art of the

smith is, that a gypsy boy is in Hungary called *purde*, just as the Australian colonists call the children of the aborigines "pickaninnies." *Purde* is generally supposed to be the equivalent in the gypsy language for "boy." It is really the imperative mood of the verb to blow, for, while the gypsy father is handling the hammer and the tongs, he makes his son manage the bellows. The real gypsy word for "boy" is *csávé*, whence our slang word "chap" is derived. I have been told that the hordes, or rather bands, of *sátoros czigányok*, "tented gypsies," who wander backwards and forwards between Transylvania and the Danubian Principalities, have gold and silver vessels in their possession, to which they attach a peculiar, perhaps a superstitious importance. When hard pressed by poverty they have been known to pledge these articles, but never to sell them, and they always contrive to redeem them when pledged.

Those gypsies who become skilful musicians certainly do gain a popularity, and a sort of abnormal social status, which elevate them far above their fellows. "No entertainment without the gypsy" is acted on not merely by the peasant, but also by his superiors in rank. When a nobleman or squire has run through a fine estate through his foolish extravagance, ten to one but you will hear the sums which he squandered upon the gypsies cited as a large item in his ruin. As for the Magyar peasant, the popular

rhyme says that, if the gypsy play badly, he gets his head broken with his own fiddle-bow, but should he succeed, in touching the feelings of the excitable peasant, he will give him his shirt off his back. In one case a gypsy musician gave his daughter a dowry of 20,000 florins. This was perhaps an exceptional instance of gypsy prosperity, but there are many musicians who live in comfort and luxury. Their numbers would doubtless be much greater if it were not for the extravagance and thoughtlessness which characterize the race.

It may seem absurd to attribute political feelings to poor wandering pariahs, but the Hungarians do so, saying that the gypsies are all "good patriots." The fact is that the Czigány is a sort of retainer of the Magyar, and cannot well live without him. The insolent good-nature of the one just fits in with the simple-hearted servility of the other. Hence the gypsy is most commonly found in those parts of the country where the Magyars or Wallachs are in the majority. He does not find the neighbourhood of the hard-working, money-loving Swabian profitable to him. Even in Pest, that "*magna et ditissima Teutonica villa*," I have never once heard a gypsy speak German. A Transylvanian gentleman told me a curious story, illustrating the anti-Austrian feelings of these dark-skinned musicians. He had just returned from abroad, and was consequently dressed in the

ordinary costume of civilized Europe. While entertaining some Austrian officers, he learned that a celebrated musician, a gypsy acquaintance of his, was in the hotel. He accordingly sent for him to play before them. When the gypsy came, however, he complained that he could not recognize a Hungarian gentleman in "*sváb*" clothes. My Transylvanian friend respected the musician's patriotic prejudices, took off his coat, and sat in his shirt-sleeves, and the satisfied gypsy played his violin with his wonted skill and good-humour. After the catastrophe of Világos in '49, when executions, spies, and martial law, made the life of the Hungarian bitter to him, destroyed social confidence, and saddled him with debt, the gypsies felt the full force of the melancholy state of things, and their numbers are said to have visibly wasted away. One of their most celebrated tunes is the *Nagy-Idai Nóta.* It takes its name from the fortress Nagy-Ida, which Perényi had entrusted in 1557 to a band of gypsies. The enemy had already abandoned the siege, and were retiring, when a gypsy shouted after them from the wall, "If we had only powder, we would not let you off so easily." On hearing this naïve betrayal of the straits to which the garrison were reduced, the enemy turned back and took the place by assault.

We have observed above that the caste-feelings of the Magyar peasant prevent him from practising

certain kinds of music, which require a long apprenticeship, and may be made, when acquired, a means of obtaining one's livelihood. Similar feelings prevent him from becoming a buffoon, a quack, or a circus-rider. But playing on the shepherd's horn or on the *tilinka* (a sort of flageolet), is open to none of these objections. It is a perfectly respectable way of amusing oneself or friends. The same remark holds good to the making of verses to be sung to the accompaniment of the *tilinka*. This is a custom to which he is still addicted. Among these compositions there prevails a great diversity of character, ranging, as they do, from the baldest doggerel to ballads which have no fault, unless it be that of being too short. Many of all classes have been collected from the mouths of the peasantry, and printed. Of those which I have read some are marked by an extreme delicacy, tenderness, and simplicity; others, again, by an eccentric incoherence, which has for some persons a charm, mocking the reader or hearer with an assemblage of images which he thinks may have a connection and a meaning if he could only discover it.

A gentleman once gave me an interesting though imperfect account of the songs made in his village about the popular hero Garibaldi, or as they called him "*Garibongyi*." They seemed to illustrate the half-unconscious deception, the vivid realism, and

contracted imagination of the uneducated mind. Their origin and form were somewhat as follows :— A young peasant has been drawn in the conscription, and sent to Italy. In a year or two he comes home on leave of absence for a short time. His friends and fellow-villagers instantly beset him with questions about the strange land into which he has travelled as *Császár katonája* (Emperor's soldier); but they are most of all curious to know if he has seen the renowned "*Garibongyi*," the deliverer of nations, the friend of the Emancipator, Kossuth Lajos. Of course it would never do for him to say that he has not. What is the use of a man going to Italy if he sees nothing remarkable when there. So he answers that he has seen him, and is forthwith called upon to give a description of his appearance. This he does by drawing him according to the Hungarian peasant's ideas as to how a popular hero should look. On his head he wears a *pörge kalap*, or pork-pie hat; his *mente* or hussar's jacket is flung over his shoulders; he is mounted on a white charger, which has just been well rubbed down by his attendant hussar, &c. Then the whole result is put into a loose kind of metre, with some amount of rhyme, or at any rate assonance, either by the young soldier himself, or by some young villager who is a better hand at such composition. It is not uncommon for two peasant lads to enter into a sort of

partnership, one of them composing the words, while the other sets them to a tune upon his *tilinka.* So that, although the Huns were certainly not akin to the Hellenes, some traits of Arcadia may still be found in *Magyarország.*

A Reformed pastor observed to me that there is a good deal of difference of character between a *föld-mivelö,* or "cultivator of the soil," and a *mesterember,* or artisan; so, too, between either of them and a *pásztor,* or herdsman. Of the latter class, again, we can distinguish four clearly-marked varieties—the *csikós,* or "colt-herd," the *gulyás,* or neatherd, the *kanász,* or swineherd, and the *juhász,* or shepherd. My friend said that each of these herdsmen caught, as it were by contagion, something of the character of the animals he tended. Just as the *csikós* is the hero of the wilderness, and the *kanász* is its ruffian, so the *juhász*—as his fleecy charge give him but little trouble—has leisure to become the poet and the musician. The other herdsmen are accustomed to enliven their unoccupied hours by paying the shepherd a visit, and, while eating his curds, listening to the sounds of his *tilinka.*

In his music, as in his poetry, the Magyar gives expression to that melancholy which is a principal trait of his character. His countenance and his bearing are alike staid and dignified, nor would the calmness of his ordinary demeanour suggest to a

stranger the impetuous energy which he displays when at length roused. This habitual calmness, coupled with a tendency to ungovernable excitement, is said to characterize his kindred the Turanian nations of Northern Asia. "*Sirva vigad a magyar,*" "weeping the Hungarian makes merry," is a popular proverb, which expresses the national tendency to become maudlin under the influence of wine. The Hungarians are perhaps the only people in Europe whose national hymn contemplates the possibility of the utter destruction of their nation. Yet so it is. After saying that it is impossible that so much patriotism should fail of success, that so many heroic hearts should in vain have died for their fatherland, that the better days must come after which yearn so many devout souls, the poet (Vörösmarty) nevertheless adds:—

"Or there shall come, if there must come, glorious death, where over its grave stands a nation in blood.

"And the tomb, into which a nation sinks, the peoples surround; and in the eyes of millions is seen the tear of sorrow."

Indeed, this taint of melancholy in their mirth seems to characterize not only the Magyars, but also the Slaves and the Roumans, especially the latter. Compared with the popular melodies of all these three races, the *Jodeln* of the Germans is remarkably cheerful. The sentimentalism which foreigners, and not least of

all Hungarians, ridicule in the Germans, is something quite different from melancholy such as that of the Magyar or of the Rouman. It is, as it were, an artificial substitute for it. Another characteristic of the German which his Magyar neighbours are always dwelling on is his vulgarity. No one who knows the German comic papers of Vienna and Pest, or the songs sung at the beer-gardens, to which the German *Spiessbürger* resorts, can deny that there are some grounds for the imputation. Are vulgarity and good spirits then allied qualities? And are both of them connected with that malleability and plasticity of character which enable the German all over the world to assimilate himself to the natives of the countries in which he has settled,—qualities which conduce in no small degree to his success in life?

CHAPTER X.

PEASANTS AND BRIGANDS.

The Word *Betyár*—*Betyárismus* and *Deutschthümlerei* compared—"Poor Lads"—Hungarian and Austrian Military Conscriptions—Sympathy with Outlaws—The Death of a Brigand—Conservative Prejudices—Statarium—Soldiers on Leave—Effect of Military Service.

EVERY language possesses words which can be translated into another language only by awkward periphrases. Such a word is *betyár* in Hungarian. On the Great Plain there are two classes of farm-servants, known respectively as *béres* and *betyár*. Both of them are paid partly in money and partly in kind. The principal distinction between them is, that the first is engaged for the whole year, the latter, for only eight, nine, or even fewer months out of the twelve. I imagine that this is the *original* meaning of the word *betyár*.

The next stage in its use is when it denotes what our old writers called a "masterless loon" (*herrenloser*

Kerl), a peasant, often some kind of herdsman, out of regular employ and ready for adventures. From this the transition is natural to a peasant adventurer, a stealer of horses, oxen, pigs, or perhaps even a highwayman or brigand. At this stage in the growth of its meaning it can easily be understood how the word has become nearly synonymous with our "scamp" or "blackguard," to express disapprobation of misconduct of any kind, especially of low insolence or violence.

On the other hand, as the *betyár* was generally a young man with a good deal of energy in his composition, the word came to be applied to a rustic who makes himself irresistible among the belles of the village by the tastiness or eccentricity of his dress, the vivacity of his manners, and the vigour of his dancing. In this sense the Hungarian *betyár* has been compared to the Spanish *majo*. Through the imitation of foreign manners prevalent amongst the upper, and a large portion of the middle classes, the national type had to be sought amongst the peasantry. The reaction against the anti-national reforms of Joseph II., a peculiar and half wilful misunderstanding of the current expressions "democracy" and "equality," and the bitterness engendered by Austrian bureaucratic oppression, between 1849 and 1859, all combined to render what was supposed, rightly or wrongly, to be an imitation of peasant manners fashionable among *soi-disant* "patriots." Readers of

Heine will be reminded of the "*Deutschthümlerei*" of the extreme anti-Gallican party headed by Menzel after the War of Liberation, when clean linen, silver forks and courtesy were considered disgraceful to a descendant of Arminius. In a similar class, in Hungary both numerous and influential, the word *betyár* became an appellation which it was their highest ambition to merit. It is scarcely necessary to add that this imitation of the manners and morals of the peasant was in most cases confined to the meaner side of his character. In the "Magyar Nabob," the best of M. Jókai's novels, when the nabob of the story proposes to pass off a coltherd on his "noble" companions as one of their equals in rank, the other suggests as a difficulty that he does not know how to behave like a gentleman. The grandee answers: "The greater *betyár* thou art, the greater gentleman thou wilt be considered; it is only by his modesty that a peasant can be recognized. Be rude to my servants, familiar to my guests, call them all by their diminutives; me for instance thou wilt call 'Jack.'" The peasant follows his patron's instructions, and by the coarseness of his jokes, the rudeness of his behaviour, the loud tones of his voice and a free use of his fists convinces the most sceptical of his "nobility." Of late years "*betyárism*" has been declining, but when I first visited Hungary in 1862 the class of would-be *betyárs* was still sufficiently

large and self-asserting to make the word accepted as a description of the typical Magyar. It is hence very often applied to such foreigners as show peculiar quickness in learning the Hungarian language or in adopting Hungarian habits.

When a Hungarian peasant loses his wife or is jilted by his sweetheart, he very often becomes a *betyár* (*Scotice* land-louper) for two or three years. This mode of consolation is, or at any rate very recently was, regarded by the public opinion of his class, as a course of foreign travel is in England. Nor was it discountenanced by the country magistrates of the old school. Such a vagabond was not supposed to support himself by any criminal means. Casting aside for the time all thoughts of permanent gain or provision for the future, he wandered from one farm-house to another, receiving as a guest the relief which Hungarian hospitality before 1848 would have thought it wrong to refuse.

An expression similar in its ambiguity to *betyár* is *szegény legény*, "poor lad." The name is often applied euphemistically to brigands or robbers. Many of these vagabonds, however, really deserved the appellation given them by popular sympathy. Before 1848 there was no regular military conscription in Hungary as in other continental countries. The Diet voted from time to time the contingent of recruits which they agreed to furnish to the

Austrian army. They then proceeded to apportion to each county the number of such recruits which it had to furnish. This proportion was then raised by the county magistrates pretty much according to their own goodwill and pleasure. Things went hardly with any young fellow who had had the misfortune to displease the *szolga-bíró* of his *járás* or hundred, and had neither money nor rich patron or relative to buy him off. He at any rate must go to the wars, unless, as was not unseldom the case, he preferred to lead the life of an outlaw in the woods or on the *puszták*, as the wildernesses of the Great Plain were called.

After 1849 the Austrians introduced into Hungary a regular system of conscription, which naturally gave great dissatisfaction to Hungarians of every class. I am far from asserting that this dissatisfaction was reasonable; but the blundering brutality of Austrian officials generally contrived to render even beneficial innovations detestable. The main difference, as regarded the peasant, between the two systems was as follows:—Before 1848, as Hungary was a constitutional country, no recruits could be levied without the consent of the Diet. This assembly represented the landlords, who naturally did not wish to see the number of their labourers and tenants diminished by a too extensive grant of recruits. Consequently a great deal of higgling went on between the Diet and the Government as to the

number which should be taken. The Hungarian peasant suffered from having to serve two masters—the Government and his lord; at the same time he gained something by the arrangement, as each of them tried to defend him from overmuch oppression on the part of the other. The levies were made at uncertain intervals. When once recruited the Hungarian soldier remained in the army until death, or till he became incapable of service.* This system had all the uncertainty of a lottery. Of course that character appertains, though in a less degree, to the French system of conscription introduced by the Austrians. But the latter was repeated every year, the irritation which it caused perpetually recurred. The recruit, it is true, had to serve but eight or ten years; but they were the best years of his life. Moreover—and this was the main difference—the Austrian army was immensely increased, and in a still larger proportion was increased the number of Hungarian recruits. The dissatisfaction, therefore, felt by the peasant at the change of system was, from his point of view, well founded. It was, besides, encouraged by the political classes who regarded the Imperial army as an instrument of tyranny employed in keeping them in subjection. The fugitives from the

* Such was the case till 1830, when the Diet fixed the period of service at ten years. The Diet of 1840 introduced the choice of recruits by lot instead of the arbitrary will of the county officials.

Austrian conscription were regarded with even more sympathy than those who had fled from the Hungarian.

At the same time there can be little doubt that the accounts commonly given of the sympathy with which the peasant regards the brigand are a good deal exaggerated. This has been chiefly done by such Hungarians as, under the influence of a foolish sentimentality, think it a fine thing for their country to produce brigands superior to the vulgar footpads of other lands. There have been many cases in which the sympathy of certain portions of the population have enabled "poor lads" to elude for a long time the pursuit of justice. At the same time we must not forget the apathy with which people in a less advanced stage of civilization submit to many other remediable evils beside brigandage—to evils which no one supposes them to regard with sympathy. Nor should we forget the fear which a band of desperate men can always inspire in a country in which the laws are weakly and badly administered. If a peasant does not feel sure that the whole band will be taken and hanged, he is afraid to hand over a single robber for a term of imprisonment. The fear of the *vörös kakas*, "red cock,"* on his barn

* Compare Meg Merrilies' words in Scott's *Guy Mannering*, chapter iii.: "Weel, there's ane abune a'—but we'll see if the red cock craw not in his bonnie farmyard ae morning before day-dawning."

or his homestead deters him. Of all outrages incendiarism is the one most dreaded in Hungary,

The popular ballad, or "folksong," on Juhász András ("Andrew Shepherd"), who was for so many months the terror of the two counties of Zala and Somogy, may here be quoted as illustrative of the halo of spurious romance thrown around a vulgar *Bersekir* by an imaginative and ignorant peasantry. It ran thus:—

"Forest, O forest! do not shed thy leaves; Juhász András dwelleth in thee, so long as they afford a thick shade. Brook, O brook! flow for his service, that they may wash his linen *gatya* in thy waters.

"Spanwide open stands the door at Pusztakrug; over it a white doveling takes her flight. Fly, doveling, to the *betyár*, and greet him! When he hither comes, on roses shall tread his feet.

"There, close to the bank of the Drave, is the mill made fast. Against him (*i.e.* Juhász) has no gun any power; the balls which the pandurs aim against him he catches with the naked hand.

"Starry sky, thou must not let the night become overclouded; rather light up his path, that he may come and rest in his true love's arms: in her embrace not ten counties can avail to harm him."

Juhász ("Shepherd") may be considered the successor of Patkó ("Horseshoe"), who for three years

lorded it as the chief brigand of South-west Hungary. He was at last shot in a skirmish with Austrian *gendarmes*. The fate of Juhász was more ignoble. The great prevalence of brigandage over a large portion of the country, especially in the districts inhabited by Magyars during last year (1868), at length roused the Hungarian authorities, both central and local, to abate the nuisance. A special grant of 60,000 florins was voted by the Diet for the suppression of brigandage. The magistrates and police of the counties haunted by Juhász commenced the persecution of his band with so much energy, that at last four were killed and nine taken, and the only one at large was the redoubtable captain himself. The fact that he was thus left alone in the world, the last of his gang, led to his destruction shortly afterwards.

On the morning of the 4th of December, 1868, a peasant of a village in the county of Zala went to feed his cow in a lonely shed some little distance from the village. There he found a man—whom he had no difficulty in recognizing as the redoubtable Juhász—had taken shelter during the night. The brigand demanded refreshments, which were supplied him, and his further demand for dinner at noon was also complied with. The peasant then, afraid not only of his guest, but also of the pandurs who were on his track, requested Juhász to seek shelter else-

where. This irritated the latter, who threatened to shoot his host, but spared his life, yielding to the entreaties of the peasant's wife, who had brought his dinner from the village. Thoroughly aroused by the complication of dangers which surrounded him, the peasant determined to rid himself of his troublesome guest. He went and procured the assistance of his two brothers and a neighbour, who were armed with two guns and an axe. He himself first entered the shed alone and unarmed. He found Juhász and his wife still there. Taking an axe which hung from a nail in the wall, he said to his wife, "Take this home with you," but instead of handing it to her, he struck Juhász a blow on the head. The robber at once closed with him, the three confederates rushed in, and the four peasants continued to beat the robber until—to use the euphemism of the Hungarian newspapers—they had "rendered him harmless." Then calling the judge of the village, they got a waggon to convey the robber to the county-town. By that time, however, the latter had so far recovered his strength that it took six men to bind him and place him in the waggon. Before it reached its destination Juhász had died, without having uttered a word after he was first struck with the axe. The "heroic" peasants had the blood-money of 3,000 florins divided among them.

It would be well if the sentimental feelings which make heroes and martyrs of ruffians and idlers, which

condone all offences against society for the sake of the courage shown in committing them, were confined to the peasantry. It is, however, notorious that they are entertained by many of the smaller landed gentry. This class has not yet emancipated itself from the prejudices which prevailed before 1848 — the prejudices natural to a non-commercial community. With these persons any rapid improvement in a man's pecuniary circumstances is conclusive proof of his rascality. Their own indolence, want of enlightenment, class pride, and class prejudices, keep the field clear for any spirited adventurer unencumbered by such *impedimenta;* but they never for a moment reflect that they themselves are in a great measure the cause of his success, or that they themselves might share it. It is so much easier to call a man a swindler, an usurer, a Jew, a foreigner, than to bestir themselves to meet the exigencies of a changed state of society; that cannot be done over chibouques and a pack of cards. If some Jew has *exploité* the natural resources of some little-known district—of course making his own profit the principal object of his speculations—and is suddenly disembarrassed of some few thousand florins by the "poor lads," why, after all, he only got them by cheating honester and more respectable people than himself; he, too, is a *kapa-kasza-kerülö*, "a hater of hard work" (*lit.* "avoiding the hoe and the scythe"). What makes Hun-

gary just at this moment so interesting to a student of social life—to a novelist such as Scott was—is the contrast between these old-fashioned gentry, who are not yet extinct, and their new-fangled successors, often their own sons or nephews, who have acquired, partly from returned refugees, partly from foreign travel, "all the vices of Western civilization."

Social changes are now accomplished so rapidly that the particular contrast I have alluded to above will soon disappear. But middle-aged men still remember the exploits of Sobri, a half-mythical brigand who haunted, about thirty years ago, the forest of Bakony in Pannonia. He is said to have displayed an intermittent activity as a brigand, and some scandalmongers inferred a connection between his periods of activity and the occasional disappearance from society of a magnate known to live rather extravagantly. Still more recently the house of a country gentleman residing in the same district was robbed by the "poor lads" during his absence from home. Among the robbers must have been at least one person of education, for they had selected from the library only such books as were of considerable value. A friend of mine, neither by profession nor by temperament a man peculiarly open to romantic or Bohemian feelings, told me, with evident self-satisfaction, that the celebrated cattle-lifter Rózsa Sándor ("Alexander Rose") was a personal friend

of his. This Rózsa was one of the best-known men in the whole country, and when he was at last taken, the Austrian Ministry thought so much of their "take," that they submitted the capital sentence on him to the Emperor for his signature. This circumstance saved his life. The Emperor had such extreme repugnance to signing death-warrants, that he commuted the sentence to imprisonment for life in the fortress of Kufstein in the Tyrol.

In Hungary brigandage was an evil so widely spread, and of such long standing, that a special remedy was provided against it by a recognized summary process. It was called in the Magyar language *rögtön itélet*, "sudden judgment," but more often *statarium*, in German *Standrecht*. In every county there was a special statarial tribunal for trying persons charged with burglary or highway robbery during the period that the *statarium* was proclaimed. Baron Eötvös, in his *Village Notary*, severely said that the country might be considered in a state of normal tranquillity when the *statarium* was proclaimed in only twenty-six out of its fifty-two counties. For the statarial court to have any jurisdiction in the case, it was necessary that the offender should have been taken in the act or after uninterrupted pursuit. If this fact was proved he was hung within twenty-four hours; if not, he was handed over to the ordinary tribunals.

Under the system which prevailed in the Austrian army before 1866, there were always a very large number of soldiers absent on leave (*Urläuber*). These men were of course not allowed to marry and had a difficulty in finding regular permanent employment, as they were at any moment liable to be recalled to their regiments. Consequently they often fell into irregular and debauched habits, and I heard from many sources complaints about the demoralization which they fostered among the peasantry. This seems to me to be at least probable, though of course employers of labour all the world over are too much given to complaining of anything which tends to withdraw the working-classes from their control. A gardener complained to me, just after the disastrous day of Sadowa, "They have taken away all our good workmen already, now they are going to take away our bad ones also."

Dr. Riehl, in his book entitled *Die Bürgerliche Gesellschaft*, observes that the peasant of Germany is very little affected by military service. When he has served his time, he returns to his village just as much a peasant as when he first left it as a recruit. As an instance of this permanence of character, Dr. Riehl cites the case of the Wends of Lusatia (Lausitz), and the obstinacy with which they keep up their Slavonic dialect. The same has been told me repeatedly of the Magyar peasant. "He serves

for years in Bohemia under German officers, and when he comes home he knows, thank God, as little German as when he was drawn in the conscription." My own experience of *Urläuber* and old soldiers, it is true, did not bear out the truth of the statement, but then those with whom I came into contact were exceptional characters, who, instead of returning to their father's fields and the plough, had taken to driving foreigners about the country, and such men generally understand and often speak German, although they may never have served in the army at all.

CHAPTER XI.

VALERIA.

Hungary and Pannonia—Valeria—The Monastery of Mons Pannoniæ—Birth-Place of St. Martin—Foundation and Restoration—Used as a Fortress—Monastic Hospitality—Architecture of the Church—St. Stephen's Seat—An Extensive Prospect—The Library—The Benedictines in Hungary—Exceptional Privileges—Flight into Silesia—Joseph II. and Francis II.—Educational Work—Lake Balaton—Tihany—Turkish Raids—Füred—Ruined Castles—Importance of Lake Balaton—Veszprim—A Cistercian Convent—An Aristocratic Bishop—Bakonybél.

THOSE persons who talk of France as Gallia, and Poland as Sarmatia, are in the habit of calling Hungary Pannonia. In not one of these three cases is the ancient name co-extensive with the modern country to which it is applied. If the reader will look at the map of Hungary he will see that the Danube runs eastward from Vienna as far as the Hungarian town of Vácz (*German* Waizen), and then making a right angle pursues a southward course as far as the frontiers of Servia. The country contained

in this angle was the Roman province of Pannonia. The northern part of this district was the portion of Hungary most favoured by her mediæval kings. Here are the cities in which they held their courts and convoked their Diets—Buda, which gradually raised itself to the official rank of capital; Esztergam (*Lat.* Strigonium, *Germ.* Gran,) the Canterbury of Hungary and see of the primate; and Székes-Féhérvár (*Germ.* Stuhlweissenburg), "the white fortress of the throne," which is even now spoken of by its Latin name Alba Regalis. As these mediæval kings, especially the most celebrated of them, St. Stephen, St. Ladislaus, and Matthias Corvinus, were devoted sons of Mother Church, northern Pannonia abounds in large estates held by ecclesiastical corporations, and it was in this part of the country that I came most into contact with the Roman Catholic clergy. Indeed the last and not the least pleasant of my Hungarian reminiscences are of a four days' excursion in an open carriage with a young Roman Catholic priest, in the course of which we visited two monasteries.

Pannonia is almost co-extensive with one of the four "circles" into which the counties of Hungary Proper are grouped. In none of these "circles" is the Magyar element so evenly spread over its whole extent as in this, the trans-Danubian; and as a natural consequence, in none does it have so much

influence in magyarizing the rest of the population. In my own mind I always divide Pannonia into three portions: the northern portion, lying between the Danube and the forest of Bakony; the central portion, including that forest and the northern bank of the Balaton lake; and the southern portion, extending from that lake to the river Drave, which divides Hungary from Croatia. Of the first portion I saw a good deal during my first and second and the first few months of my third visit to the country. Of the second portion I explored a part just before I left Hungary. The last I have not seen at all.

This country, stretching from the Drave to the neighbourhood of Györ (Raab), is the district to which the Roman Emperor Galerius gave the name of *Valeria*, in honour of his wife, the daughter of his colleague Diocletian. From Aurelius Victor we learn that Galerius made an attempt to reclaim the then wild country, by cutting down the virgin forests and drawing off the waters of Balaton (*lacus Pelso*) by a canal connecting it with the Danube.

It was in northern Pannonia that I studied the working of the electoral laws of 1848, and witnessed two contested elections for the Diet of 1865-68. But my first acquaintance with that neighbourhood dates from a visit I made in 1862 in company with hospitable Hungarian friends to the principal monastic establishment in Hungary. It stands on a

projecting spur of the range of low hills which bounds to the south-east the Little Hungarian Plain, and which is covered with the oaks and beeches that afford shelter to the swineherds of Bakony, and is known in different languages by the various names of Sacer Mons Pannoniæ, Pannonhalma, and Martinsberg. Dr. Maurice Czinár, librarian of the community, kindly compiled for my use a short notice (*brevis notitia*) in Latin, from which I have extracted the following particulars respecting the history of the convent.

The monastery of Saint Martin is admitted on all hands to be the oldest in Hungary. It is in fact older than the monarchy itself, being founded by Duke Gejza,* who began building it about 996. On his death shortly after, the work was carried on by his son Saint Stephen, the King, and finished in 1001, in which year the church seems to have been dedicated. Hartwik, the contemporary bishop of Ratisbon, and biographer of Saint Stephen, tells us that the site of this church and monastery was fixed on this hill, because it was the common opinion of Christendom that here had been the paternal inheritance of Saint Martin. Although never a martyr, this saint was during the early part of the middle

* "Duke," *Dux*, is the title generally given to the chiefs of the Magyar nation before Stephen received a royal crown from the Pope.

ages one of the most popular in the calendar, and seems to connect in his person the east and west of Latin Christianity, being born here in Pannonia, of which country he was recognized as the tutelar saint, and as bishop of Tours becoming the patron of the warriors of Gaul. Sulpicius Severus, the disciple and biographer of Saint Martin, tells us, indeed, that he was born at Sabaria; but it appears from documents still preserved in the library of the monastery, that this was the name of a town at the foot of this very hill, which disappeared in the fearful devastations inflicted by the Mongols in the year 1242. As the birthplace of so great a saint, it is probable that this was the site of a chapel even before the Hungarian invasion of Pannonia. It is, however, not more than probable, for, although some antiquaries have persuaded themselves that they have found in the present building remains of a pre-Hungarian date, others have shown that the Byzantine character of those supposed relics does not necessarily prove so high an antiquity.

The building of Gejza and Stephen was not long left undisturbed. The Benedictines had been called into the country by these two sovereigns for the purpose of converting their heathen subjects. Those who refuse to Stephen the title of saint, must allow that he showed great abilities as a sovereign and administrator. During his reign of thirty-eight years

the anti-Christian party, although they made one or two abortive efforts to shake off the yoke of the new faith, were always kept in check. A short time after his death a natural reaction set in. Heathenism became again for a few months the dominant religion. This establishment of the Benedictines, the chief agents in the work of conversion, would of course be an especial object of persecution. Hence we can feel no surprise when we read of this church as "*restauratam, melioratam et amplificatam, anno* 1137," as the diploma of King Bela II. states, who, together with a great number of the chief nobles of the realm, was present at this the second dedication of the church.

This building, however, like its predecessor, did not remain long unmolested. For we find that Urias, abbot of this monastery and companion of Andrew II. on his crusade, had again to rebuild the church "*divino judicio combustam.*" This same Urias, like many other ecclesiastics of those troublous times, seems to have been by no means deficient in the virtues of a soldier; for, besides engaging in the "Holy War," he distinguished himself by his defence of his convent against a Mongol horde, to whose numbers and fury two royal fortresses—Alba Regalis and Strigonium, superior, as the historian of the brotherhood bids us observe, both in position and in garrison,—had succumbed.

The edifice built by this stout-hearted abbot was dedicated in 1225. This was the third and last dedication of a church for the monastery. The building was never again destroyed to such an extent as to require to be consecrated anew, although the roof has since been three times consumed by fire; once through the malice of the Ottomans, and twice through the carelessness of its own garrison.

For this hill was too evidently intended by nature for a stronghold to have been left without fortifications. However unsuited may have been the companionship of soldiers for the quiet and studious followers of Saint Benedict, the contracted space on the top of the Sacer Mons Pannoniæ was occupied by a building, half-castle, half-convent. This state of things lasted till the beginning of the eighteenth century, when the arch-abbot Benedict had the warlike stores removed to Komárom or Komorn, and converted the barracks partly into cells for the religious, partly into rooms for the guests, whom they are always ready to entertain with true Hungarian hospitality. It was in some of these rooms that our party slept. We had originally intended to return to Györ before night, but this was a proposition not to be listened to; so the reverend gentlemen, instead of wasting their breath in arguing the point, took the opportunity, while we were occupied in looking over the place, to send away our carriages with orders for them to call

again the next morning. This, although the first, was by no means the only time, when I have found myself detained almost *nolens volens*, by a hospitality, literally urgent. But *revenons à nos moutons.*

The church was already in its 640th year, when, in 1683, the last of the three fires above mentioned weakened the building. In 1730 it was judged necessary to gird its walls with iron bands to keep them together. It was thus enabled to sustain the shocks of two earthquakes in 1763 and 1810. To remedy, however, its weakness, the community had built a massive lofty tower, four-sided up to the level of the church-roof, and round above, which now serves as a shelter against the fury of the winds, which blow with great violence upon so high and so exposed a situation.

The church itself consists of a nave and two aisles. It has no principal entrance at the west end, nor any of the adornment which commonly distinguishes that part in churches of architectural pretensions. A plain door, "*janua univalvis, qualis modo in mediocris conditionis civium ædibus cernitur,*" admits us into the north aisle. Three windows, irregularly placed, pierce the western wall, and above it two small wooden cupolas hold the bells, and thus imperfectly supply the want of a church tower. On the other hand, the private entrance for the monks is not destitute of beauty. Behind the altar, which, with the whole sanctuary, is elevated high above the body of the

church, stand four columns, between which are placed statues of the two canonized kings of Hungary, Saints Stephen and Ladislaus. In the midst, under the large round east window, is the statue of Saint Martin himself, giving his cloak to the beggar. Contrary to the usual representations of the story, the saint appears here on foot instead of on horseback. The clustered pillars dividing the nave from the aisles support pointed arches, and have their capitals ornamented with sculptured oak-leaves. The greater part of this work is, unfortunately, obscured by the barbarous whitewashing which the church has twice undergone—first, when Joseph II. suppressed the order; and again, when Francis II. reinstated them in their possessions. Where the whitewash has been scraped away, the carving seems to have been finely done. For the rest, as Dr. Czinár observes: "*Eum ornatum, qui in celebriora Germaniæ, Galliæ, Angliæ, etc. templa, velut insigne ejus ævi in Deum pietatis monumentum, profusa liberalitate collatus cernitur, adeo ut ipsam architecturæ artem fere suffocaverit, hic frustra quæsieris.*"

Under the church is a crypt fitted up as a chapel. At its west end is a marble seat in a niche of the wall where St. Stephen is said to have sat when hearing mass. On his fête-day, the 20th of August, the peasantry come in crowds to sit in it, as it is supposed to be a sovereign remedy against rheumatism.

I do not know that I have anything more to observe about the antiquities of the place, except to notice that the quadrangle of the monastery seems to date in part from the time of Matthias Corvinus, as a stone is still to be seen with the figures 1486 inscribed upon it.

About halfway up the great tower is a terrace, which serves as a promenade. It commands an extensive view stretching into eleven Hungarian counties over an area, it is said, of 600 Austrian square miles. As I looked over this immense tract of country, a large part of which is plain, I turned to the Benedictine, who stood next me, and observed that it was impossible to find so extensive a prospect in England, in which so little water should be visible, as in the view then before us.

The oldest Hungarian historian, known as the Anonymous Notary of King Bela, tells us of the effect produced by this very prospect upon the conqueror Árpád. After he and his follower had drunk of the fountain of Sabaria, at the foot of the hill, he ascended to the summit, and looked upon the immense tract of country spread before him. "*Visa pulchritudine terræ*," beholding the fair beauty of the land, he was seized with the desire to possess it as his own, and departed in all haste to make war upon the Slavs and Pannonians, who at that time occupied it.

The library of the convent is now placed in a fine

hall, built for the purpose during the present century. It contains more than 75,000 volumes, a very large proportion of which were bought in Germany about 1804. The suppression of a great number of the German convents by Napoleon had thrown their libraries in a flood upon the market, and the books were to be bought at a low price. On the principle, "*ostentatio opium inutilium monacho non prodest*," the library of the reverend fathers at Mons Pannoniæ is filled with useful books rather than with bibliographical curiosities. It contains, however, two MSS. of the fourteenth century, one of them being a Latin Bible, written in small characters on parchment, and the other a volume of sermons on paper. It can, besides, boast of more than fifty books printed before the year 1500, among which are two copies of the Vulgate printed at Basle in 1470 and 1490 respectively, and another at Venice in 1483.

A few words about the fortunes of the order in Hungary may not be considered out of place. As seen in my account of the Church, they were called in by the first Christian Magyar sovereigns, Duke Gejza and King Stephen. Their chief work was the conversion of the heathen Hungarians. In thus aiding Stephen in the Christianization of his country, they established a just claim to be reckoned among its greatest benefactors. If Hungary had not at that opportune moment embraced Christianity, Germany

and Italy might have exacted vengeance for the devastations which they had suffered in their hour of weakness and division, and the Magyars have disappeared like their predecessors the Avars. The conversion of Hungary covered with oblivion her former deeds, and procured for her national chief the rank of a Christian king, and the support and protection of the Pope, the head and centre of Christendom. His formidable moral influence shielded Hungarian independence against the repeated efforts of the Emperors to reduce the kingdom to the condition of a fief of the Empire, to which they had reduced the Slavonic kingdom of Bohemia. We find Pope Gregory VII., in a letter dated April 14, 1075, energetically urging King Gejza IV. to defend the dignity and independence of his country against the Emperor Henry IV: "*Sicque fiat in pace nobilissimum Regnum Hungariæ, quod hactenus per se principaliter viguit, ut Rex ibi, non Regulus fiat.*"

To the counsels of the first abbot, Anastasius, and the prayers of the brotherhood, Stephen attributed his victory over Kupa, the champion of heathenism. "*Confortati et laureati sumus,*" is the expression in the diploma of 1001, in which he grants to this monastery the same immunities which belonged to the original Benedictine Society on Monte Cassino. Of these the principal consisted in an independence of all subordinate spiritual authorities, being subjected

immediately and directly to the jurisdiction of the Apostolic See itself. As this privilege had been conferred upon St. Benedict and his monks at Monte Cassino in consideration of their unwearied labours in converting the heathen in that diocese, Stephen thought it only just that like privileges should be conferred on Anastasius and his companions, who had with like zeal laboured for the conversion of the heathen Hungarians.

Thus independent of episcopal authority, the order has for itself a separate ecclesiastical territory, in which the Arch-abbot of Mons Pannoniæ enjoys all the rights of a bishop in his diocese, except that he cannot confer the superior orders. He has, besides, the right of appearing at the Diet of Hungary, and sitting in the Table of Magnates, as before the Reformation our mitred abbots sat in the Upper House.

When the defeat (1526) of King Lewis II. at Mohács by the Sultan Solyman laid Hungary prostrate, the religious community on Sacer Mons Pannoniæ shared in the general suffering. Struck with terror at the approach of the terrible infidels, they left their convent almost deserted, and fled into Silesia. They were recalled (1638) by the Emperor Ferdinand III., and all their privileges were confirmed, in the hope that they might prove as efficient in drawing away the Hungarians from their new

error, Protestantism, as they had been in converting them from their old error, heathenism. In the next century they were disturbed again by the restless spirit of Joseph II. This liberal despot—who acted on the principle that, if a sovereign's intentions be good, such trifles as constitutional rights ought not to hinder for a moment their being carried into effect—arbitrarily suppressed the order, Dec. 4, 1786. In accordance with his centralizing plans, the library of the monastery was carried away, partly to Pest, partly to Vienna. The natural consequence of this violent proceeding was that the Benedictines, thus summarily turned out of house and home, swelled the ranks of the discontented Constitutionalists, whose complaints, rising to menaces, and almost to open insurrection, at length compelled Joseph, on his death-bed, to sign a revocation of all the decrees he had issued of his own sole authority. The order itself was re-established (1802) in its former possessions by the Emperor Francis II., who thus earned from them the designation "*alter Ordinis fundator.*"

As there was no longer any question of converting either Pagans or Protestants, the work now assigned to the order was that of teaching. The difference between their former and present objects is represented on a metal scroll over the principal entrance to the church. There Religion is seen sitting between King Stephen on the right and the Emperor Francis

on the left, who are handing each his diploma to the abbot of his time. On that of Stephen we read in letters of gold, *Prædicate*, 1001; on that of Francis, *Docete*, 1802. The order, which at present consists of an arch-abbot and 130 monks, have the management of three *gymnasia* of eight classes, and as many of four classes. The former are in Györ (Raab), Soprony (Oedenburg), and Esztergom (Gran); the latter in Komárom, Güns, and Pápa. Besides this, they support out of their revenues two *gymnasia* of four classes, in which, however, they do not themselves teach. Of course the order have, in addition to their educational work, to provide vicars (*Administratores*) in all the parishes of their diocese. This monastery is itself a seminary, at which forty-four candidates for orders are at present educated. As three convents—Kis-Czell, Tihany, and Bakony-bél—belong to the order, there are seldom more than fifty of the fathers actually at any one time in residence at Sacer Mons Pannoniæ.

It was in the summer of 1867 that I visited two out of the three monasteries which are dependent on Mons Pannoniæ—Tihany and Bakony-bél. The first of these is finely situated on the precipitous edge of a barren peninsula of volcanic origin which juts out into the shallow but picturesque Lake of Balaton. Its name is supposed to be derived from the Slave

word *blats*, signifying marsh, swamp. This lake is one of the largest in Europe, and is divided into two halves by the peninsula of Tihany, the average breadth of the lake being about 3,000 fathoms, while the ferry from Tihany to the opposite shore is no more than 200. The monastery was founded by King Andrew I. in 1057, in token of his thankfulness for the defeat of the Germans, under the Emperor Henry III., two years before. On the northern side of the peninsula are still to be seen the caves which were occupied by hermits before the foundation of the monastery. Otherwise there is but little at Tihany of archæological or architectural interest. Almost all the buildings date from the last century. During the Turkish occupation of Hungary in the seventeenth century, Tihany was occupied as a fortress or military post, and defended with such courage and vigour that it never once fell into the hands of the Mohammedan invaders. This implies no mean praise for its garrison and its commanders, seeing that the county of Somogy on the south, and Fehérvár on the east, were both under the government of Turkish pashas. In the library of the monastery are still preserved certain challenges exchanged between the Magyar captain of Tihany and a Turkish aga, couched in the choicest terms of Hungarian Billingsgate. The peninsula was the more exposed to the attacks of Turkish plundering parties, seeking to kidnap women and children, as the

shallow lake was frozen over almost every winter. The greatest defect of Tihany was its want of water, which had to be brought up in buckets from the lake below to the top of the hill. A tradition, still preserved in the memory of the people, tells us that the winding path down to the lake ran at that time through a thick underwood of cornel-trees. One cold winter day, as two maidens went down this path to draw water, they espied some Turks concealed amidst the bushes. With great presence of mind they both began singing a verse to the effect,—

> Gaily we come, gaily we go,
> From the Turks we no longer have aught to fear;
> Therefore with good heart and singing,
> We can come to the Balaton.

The Turks, who knew Hungarian, deceived by this verse, left the girls undisturbed in hopes of a richer prey. No sooner had the maidens returned home than they gave information to the garrison, who instantly directed a shower of stones upon the cornel-bushes, and then rushed out upon the discomfited robbers, who were cut off to a man.

The small convent, with its arcades and its narrow court thickly planted with trees, reminded me of some of the smaller colleges at Cambridge. It is better known and more frequently visited than many others in Hungary, from its vicinity to the fashionable watering-place of Balaton-Füred. It is, besides, very

accessible. The railway conveys the traveller in a few hours from Buda to Siófok, on the opposite shore of the lake. During the summer months a small steamer plies from this station to Füred. As I went to Füred before the season had commenced, I had to take the railway as far as Fehérvár, thence by stage-coach to Veszprém, from which town Füred is only two hours distant by the road. The Benedictines of Tihany are the owners of the mineral springs and the baths. During the season, from May to August, the place is so crowded that quarters cannot be obtained without previous notice. Of the beneficial effects of the waters, whether taken externally or internally, I do not presume to speak, but the courtesy and good-humour of the physician, whose charge it is to administer them, increases the pleasantness of a sojourn there for those who are well, as well as for his patients. The great charm of Füred is its situation, and the surrounding scenery, placed as it is between a range of low volcanic hills and the broad expanse of the lake, across which the visitor looks upon the precipitous promontory of Tihany, contrasting with the low level plain of Somogy, and its long rows of poplars. The contrast between the north-western and south-eastern shores of the lake—the former forming part of the county of Zala, the latter of Somogy—has given rise to a local proverb: "Whence is the county of Zala beautiful? From the county of Somogy."

Besides three or four large hotel-like buildings, each containing many suites of apartments, several private villas stud the shores of the lake both above and below the wells. Some of these have been recently built by magnates and others who take an interest in the newly-established sailing-club. Others, of a somewhat older date, belong to the citizens of Veszprém, its bishop and some of its canons, who own vineyards in the neighbourhood. The volcanic hills are for the most part planted with vines, amidst which meander the rough, narrow, stony lanes, which reminded me of England, accustomed as I was to the broad, sandy roads of the Great Plain.

Besides these wells at Balaton-Füred the volcanic origin of the soil of the northern shore of the lake is indicated by a medicinal spring some few miles to the south-west of Tihany. It is called Vérkút (blood-well) from the discoloration of the stones over which its waters flow. Still further to the south-west, near the German village of Rendes, is another mineral spring.

I unfortunately left the country without having seen the south-western half of the lake, which is said to surpass in picturesqueness the neighbourhood of Füred. It has acquired increased reputation from the fact of a Hungarian poet, the elder Kisfaludy, having lived there, and commemorated its castles and vineyards in his metrical tales. Indeed there is

perhaps no part of Hungary so full of mediæval ruins as this, which contains, in a small space, the castles of Sümegh, Szigliget, Szentgyörgy, Badacson, Hegyesd, Tátika and Csobáncz. The last of these belonged to a family of the name of Gyulafi, who lost their estates in 1670, in consequence of the part they took in the so-called Confederation of Trencsén, headed by the Palatine Vesselényi. According to a popular tradition one of the last of these Gyulafis bade farewell to his native land with the words,—

Sok halu Balaton,
Jó boru Badacson,
Isten hozzád, Csobáncz,
Engem többé nem látsz.

which we may translate,—

Fish-abounding Balaton,
Well-wined Badacson,
Csobáncz, God be with thee;
Me thou never more shalt see.

Then, draining his glass, he abandoned his lands and his castle, and took refuge in Turkey. He embraced Islamism, changed his name to Gyulafa, and founded a family in Anatolia. It is in reading such stories, which occur frequently in the history of Hungary during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, that one feels that after all those Scotch and English Jacobites, who wore out their lives at St. Germain and at Rome, were not the most melancholy victims of political consistency. And here I would remark

that we are in some sense already on Oriental ground. It is curious to read in a Hungarian guide-book for the lake and its environs, of border forays conducted by chiefs who rejoiced in such names as Hamza, and Bajazet.

Lake Balaton is an unique feature in Hungarian geography. It is, therefore, much to be regretted that the short-sighted greed of some of the proprietors of the south-eastern shore should have led them to take measures for draining the lake. In this they have been but too successful and have seriously diminished its area. In this project they had a powerful accomplice in the Southern Railway Company, which had constructed its line so near the northern edge of the lake as to be exposed to inundations in stormy weather. Hungary is a country in which land is very much more plentiful than water. They have more of the former than they can bring into proper cultivation. On the other hand drought is the most frequent cause of a failure of the crops. These considerations militate against all excess of drainage, but in the case of the Balaton there is another argument to be alleged in favour of leaving the lake as it is. Its bottom is composed of loose sand, which, when dried, is carried by the prevalent storm-winds over the once fertile cornfields of Somogy, converting them into barren wastes. Nor is the importance of Balaton as a feature of Hungarian scenery as an

object of attraction to foreign travellers and native seekers after pleasure, to be overlooked. Beauty has its value, even in the eyes of utilitarians.

About two hours distant from Füred is the cathedral city of Veszprém. The town is built very irregularly on and about a steep hill, whose top is occupied by the bishop's palace, the cathedral, the houses of the canons, and a seminary. This portion of the town is still called the "Fortress." A Turkish minaret, surmounting an old Gothic tower, still remains as a memorial of the dominion of the Osmanlis. As far as I know there is but one other remaining in Hungary—at Eger (*Germ.* Erlau), which is a still finer specimen. From the "Fortress" there juts out eastward among the scattered cottages of the town a precipitous promontory. Here tradition places the last camp of Kupa, who, at the head of the heathen Magyars of Somogy and Zala, attempted to sustain the cause of paganism against the superior fortunes of St. Stephen. On the left hand a rocky valley outside the town is pointed out to the stranger as *a fejes völgy*, "the valley of heads," so called in remembrance of a great massacre there made by the Turks. On the right-hand side is shown the site of the *vitéz kút*, "warrior's well," so called, as the story goes, from a Turkish soldier who asked water of a Hungarian woman, and, as he was drinking from her pitcher, was flung by her into the well.

Around Veszprém the country is full of low hills and narrow ravines.

I started northward one fine afternoon with a young priest, a professor in the seminary, for the Cistercian convent of Zircz. Our route lay through the forest of Bakony, once the classic haunt of swine-herds and brigands, whose numbers are fast diminishing before the encroachments of the axe and the plough. The weather was fine and our digestions were in good order, and the hours glided rapidly away as we conversed in Hungarian, German, and Latin. There was still some hours of the long summer day remaining when we reached Zircz. The appearance of the convent took me rather by surprise after my experiences of Sacer Mons Pannoniæ and Tihany. To use the provincial expression of my friend — he was from Somogy — all was *vadonatuj*, "bran new." Indeed a more modern-looking mansion could not well be imagined. The park behind the convent was the most English thing I saw in all my visits to Hungary. The situation of Zircz, in the midst of the forest of Bakony, is of course cooler and moister than the climate of Hungary generally, which accounts for its green turf and clumps of shady trees. Walking in this park with my fellow-traveller and one of the Cistercians, they exactly defined the social position of the community by citing the popular proverb, *Urak a*

papok, de csak a nagyok, "Priests are gentlemen, but only the great ones."

As far as I could make out, the social position of the Roman Catholic clergy is deteriorating. It is not merely that they are much less wealthy than before 1848; but the order is recruited more exclusively than it used to be from the lower classes of society. This is most clearly seen on the episcopal bench, which does not contain so many counts and barons—so many Széchenyis and Eszterházys as it did formerly. There is no such magnate-bishop now as Count Charles Eszterházy, whilom Bishop of Eger. Among the possessions of the Eszterházy family is the town of Pápa, on the western edge of the Forest of Bakony. As one of his cooks rejoiced in the name of Mundi, he was wont to sign himself facetiously in his letters to his intimate friends, "*Dominus Papæ et Mundi*, "Lord of the Pope and the World." A like play upon words was contained in his careless answer to Joseph II.'s threat of removing him from his see—"*Ibo ad Papam*"—"I will retire to Pápa." "What," exclaimed the arbitrary philanthropist, "does the fellow mutter: that he will complain to the Pope?"

Indeed, most of the anecdotes related of the Count-Bishop refer to his superiority to, and independence of, his ecclesiastical rank and character. As he was once driving a French traveller around Eger in his state-carriage, the latter slyly observed,

"Ah! your Excellency, Peter and Paul had no such fine equipages as this." But this raillery was lost upon the prelate, who calmly replied, "Of course not; they were but poor fishermen and tent-makers; they were no Counts Eszterházy." So, too, when Joseph II. expressed his surprise that the Bishop of Eger was rich enough to raise so many fine buildings as he saw there, he answered, "Sire, when the Bishop of Eger is in want of money, Count Eszterházy gives him as much as he requires." A fellow-bishop, who had begun life as a Franciscan friar, saluting him one day in the customary manner with "*Servus, Domine frater*," Count Eszterházy blandly subjoined, "*Tantum in Christo.*"

After leaving the noble mansion in which are housed the Hungarian followers of the rule of St. Bernard, my friend took me to visit some of his lay friends in the neighbourhood. It was not till late in the afternoon of the following day that we drew near to the little Benedictine convent of Bakony-bél (interior of Bakony). If it was cool at Zircz, here it was almost chilly. On the shores of Balaton we had left them reaping their corn; here they had not begun the hay harvest. This religious house lies in the bottom of a deep shady dingle, and we did not find it without some little difficulty. When we got there none of the community were at home, but as hospitality is one of the duties of the Order, the servants at once provided

us with quarters. At their full strength there are but six Benedictines sent from Sacer Mons Pannoniæ, and at the time of our visit there were only three in residence. Just before we sat down to supper the ranger brought in a young roebuck which he had just shot in the forest. The next morning early we took our carriage the direct way to Veszprém through the beech-woods, with a Hungarian indifference as to whether there was any path or not. The cool shade of those beautiful trees, with their light green foliage, reminded me of the Transylvanian forests on the frontier of Moldavia. The Bakony will still for some years more present scenery attractive even to the much-travelled Englishman. If he have ecclesiastical tastes and a smattering of conversational Latin, he will still more enjoy a visit to this very accessible but little known district.

CHAPTER XII.

HUNGARIAN CONSTITUTION BEFORE 1848—*COUNTRY SQUIRES.*

Aristocratical and Federal Character of the Old Constitution—Francis II. —A Hungarian County—Hungarian Noblemen—Noble Corporations—"Congregations"—Elected Judges—Good Effects of County Organization—County Magistrates—The Counties and the Government—"Particular Congregations"—The County Rate—The Táblabiró—His Character—Compared with Squires Western and Allworthy—Contrast of their Political Opinions—His Library —His Omniscience—Baron Eötvös on the *Táblabiró*—Petőfi's *Mr. Paul Pató*—A Transylvanian Country Gentleman, drawn by M. Gyulai—Baron Eötvös on a *Szolgabiró*.

MANY of my readers may, perhaps, be in a general way aware that before 1848 the Hungarians lived under an aristocratical sort of constitution. My expressions are purposely vague, because there was a good deal of vagueness in that old constitution—if not in its theory, at any rate in its practice—and the ideas of most Englishmen on the subject are vaguer still. Some of them, however, know that in 1848 the Hungarians legally, but at the same time radically,

changed this constitution. Their Reform Bill went, in fact, much farther than ours, as the abuses against which it was directed were more serious and more inveterate than those under which unreformed England laboured. Under the system which prevailed before 1848, the kingdom of Hungary was, in some important points, rather a confederacy of fifty-two counties and districts, than one central well-organized State. Decentralisation and self-government prevailed there to almost as great a degree as in the United States of America before the war. One important circumstance prevented any real resemblance between the two confederacies. In the United States the central government was comparatively weak, and was further conducted by a president elected for a term of four years. Hungary, on the contrary, was governed by an hereditary king, who was surrounded, advised, served, and sometimes controlled, by a permanent army of bureaucrats—men who, like the late Duke of Wellington, held, as their ruling principle in politics, that "the king's government *must* be carried on." What served still further to complicate matters was that the Crown, besides its constitutional prerogatives — in themselves sufficiently large—derived an enormous increase of power from the fact that the constitutional king of Hungary was at the same time absolute sovereign of dominions in the aggregate equalling that kingdom in territorial extent, and exceeding it

in population and wealth. Under these circumstances, it must certainly be at first sight a matter of surprise that the old Hungarian constitution existed so long. The Hungarians themselves explain the fact partly by referring to the indomitable energy, courage, and self-devotion which their race has always shown in defence of its rights; partly by the fascination exercised by their local self-government on all who in any way took part in it, whereby the lowest freeman, who had, perhaps, a very vague idea of the interests of the country at large, and but a lukewarm attachment to them, was nevertheless animated by a burning zeal in the defence of that fraction of the constitution which was peculiarly his own—his personal liberty, the privileges of his caste, the rights of his parish and his county. Both these facts are true, and, taken together, go a great way to explain the phenomenon of the continued existence of the Hungarian constitution, in spite of its loose organization and its apparent weakness, in the face of the extensive prerogatives of the Crown, unscrupulous and hostile ministers, a large standing army, and the contagion of the example of contented slavery presented by all the populations around them. They go a great way, as I have said, to explain the phenomenon, but not the whole way. Austrian statesmen were, before 1848, always content to leave good alone; indeed, they often left bad alone. As they lived in a glass house, they thought it best

not to irritate their high-spirited children into throwing stones. Besides this, there was a great deal about the Hungarian constitution which recommended it to their forbearance. It was a very venerable, time-honoured *legitimate* institution. If one came to look closely into the matter, it was as old as, perhaps older than, the "all-highest family," "the gloriously reigning house" itself. It was no modern system spawned by some disciple of Rousseau. So far from recognizing the "rights of man" as its foundation stone, it absolutely and completely ignored that detestable, new-fangled doctrine. And though the Hungarians certainly did use a great many naughty words, which ought never to be heard in the mouths of good subjects, such, for instance, as "the voice of the people," "the claims of the country," "the rights of the citizens," "privilege," "charters," "abuse of prerogative," "constitution," and such like; and though occasionally an enthusiastic young gentleman of good family, in glittering gala dress glorious with braid and buttons of onyx and jasper, might at the county quarter-sessions cite, amid the applause of his younger hearers, the examples of Brutus and Timoleon as worthy of imitation; might quote Plutarch—only from a Latin translation though—and, laying his hand on his dapper little sabre, hint that tyrants might find that it was not carried merely for show,—yet, after all, their bark was worse than their bite. Had not

they stopped their ears, like a deaf adder, against the voice of the Corsican charmer, when he called on them to declare that the House of Hapsburg had "ceased to reign?" When he had discomfited every imperial-royal army from the banks of the Ticino and the Rhine to those of the March and the Raab, did not they send against him the "Insurrection," a national army of sixty thousand "nobles," with rusty swords and old flint matchlocks, who showed that, if they could not conquer for their king, they could at any rate die for him? And so the sovereigns of the Holy Alliance, who concerned themselves so much about conspiracies in Naples, rebellions in Belgium, and *pronunciamientos* in Spain, allowed the Hungarian constitution to remain unmolested in the very centre of their dominions; and the Emperor Francis, that most paternal and anti-Jacobin of monarchs, rejoiced the hearts of a Hungarian deputation in 1821 by telling them in his peculiar and characteristic Latin—"*Totus mundus stultizat et constitutiones imaginarias quærit; vos habetis constitutionem, et ego amo illam et illæsam ad posteros transmittam.*"

What that fox meant by the word *illæsam*, he himself perhaps could not have exactly explained. In a moment of candour he would probably have admitted that in *his* vernacular, *unverbessert* was about the right translation. After the overthrow of Napoleon, until the year 1823, he never convoked a

Hungarian Diet. As many of his predecessors, and notably the popular Maria Theresa, had neglected to ask the advice of that assembly for an even longer period of time, it is possible that he thought the course she pursued a strictly constitutional one. Indeed, if constitutions are to be explained, not according to the written letter of the statute-book, but according to general custom and precedent, an impartial, non-Hungarian historian must admit that he had great show of right on his side. Now, if an English sovereign were to proceed in a similar manner to dissolve his Parliament, and then unaccountably to forget to issue any writs for the election of a new one, the English constitution would be considered, if not abolished, at any rate in complete abeyance. The Hungarians of those days did not take quite so extreme a view of the case.* They were so accustomed to this state of things from their constant study of the previous history of their country, that they must have found out some theory which explained it partially away. They admitted that it was not strictly constitutional for the crowned king —for the acts of an uncrowned king, such as Joseph II., were universally reprobated as things utterly and irredeemably illegal and invalid—to govern so long

* Although it had been expressly stipulated in solemn treaties between the Crown and the Nation that the Diet was to be convoked in Hungary every three years, and in Transylvania every year.

without the advice of his Diet; still the constitution could not be considered as defunct, nor even in a state of completely suspended animation, as long as the county organization remained untouched, and the "congregations" met regularly. By the "congregations" are meant those quarterly meetings which, for want of a better English equivalent, I have called "quarter-sessions." On this organization of the counties (*comitatus* or *municipia*) I must speak somewhat at length, as it was the cardinal point of the constitution, and was always so regarded by the Hungarians themselves.

A Hungarian county before the reforms of 1848 might be called a *direct* aristocratical republic. By "direct," I mean that every privileged citizen had the right to appear in the assembly in person; but could not be represented there: just as Athens was a direct democracy, in contradistinction to the American States, which are governed by representative legislatures. In this republic the franchise was hereditary. Every freeman, or, as the Hungarian law-books styled him, every *nobilis*, could attend the county assembly. If he was born *nobilis*, no degree of poverty or of ignorance, nothing short of actual proved crime, could disfranchise him. He was *membrum sacræ coronæ*, a member of the Hungarian Crown, and as a representative of the original free conquerors of the land, a co-partner in sovereignty

with the king. He could not be personally arrested for debt. On suspicion of high-treason against his most sacred Majesty he could be summarily arrested, but for no crime of lesser enormity. Even in case of murder, highway robbery, or burglary, he must be first summoned three times to appear before his peers on the county tribunal. Only after his neglect or refusal to obey those summons could he be arrested like a malefactor. Although so poor as to be obliged to work as a day labourer for hire, and ignorant of the Latin language, in which the debates were largely, though not exclusively, carried on, he went into the "congregation" and voted. His individual vote counted for as much as the individual vote of any count or baron there;* and it must be remembered that the number of these "nobles" was so large that one-twentieth of the whole adult male population possessed the franchise under this aristocratical constitution. In 1840, their numbers were estimated at 700,000; in 1867 at 500,000. The "noble" village of Nemesdi, in the county of Szala, which used to throw 300 *voksok* or votes, now contains but 200 hereditary voters. The false position of the *köznemesek*, "common nobles" ("peasant-nobles," as foreigners have somewhat inaccurately called them), conduced to diminish their numbers.

* At any rate at all elections; in other cases the principle that votes were to be weighed, not counted, was, I believe, generally acted on.

They were filled with the vain conceit of being the equals of the gentry, ran into debt, contracted habits of debauchery from the unscrupulous way in which, as voters, they were bribed and treated at parliamentary and municipal elections, and limited the number of their children to maintain the dignity of their families. The Hungarian Reform Bill of 1848 reserved their rights as electors, independent of any property or other qualification; but the most enlightened Liberals in the country would gladly deprive them of such an anomalous privilege, out of all harmony with the present professions of democratic principles now made so loudly in Hungary. It remains to be seen whether they will have the courage to do so. The class is known by a great variety of names, or rather nicknames, such as, the "short nobles" and the "one-spurred nobles." Many of them belong to the Slovack and Wallach nationalities, and are called *bocskoros nemes emberek*, "sandalled noblemen," while those who belong to the Magyar race have the epithets *gatyás* or *kék ujjasos* applied to them, with reference to their loose linen drawers and their blue jackets. With these *köznemesek*, these ennobled peasants, must not be confounded the proverbial *hét szilvafás nemes ember*, to wit, a gentleman, a "squireen," who has come down in the world so much as to have no more property left him but an orchard of seven plum-trees. The

distinction between the "common nobles" and the gentry was not merely, nor even mainly, one of wealth; it was a social one.

In so far as a Hungarian county was a territorial division of the country for administrative purposes, it may be held to correspond to an English one. The Latin name *comitatus* is common to both institutions. This identity is disguised by the German writers, who have called an English county *Grafschaft*, a Hungarian, *Comitat* and *Gespannschaft*. The latter word is formed from *Gespann*, the word the Germans have adopted to express the Hungarian word *ispán* or *ispány*, itself of Slavonic origin, which was rendered in Latin by *comes*. But the Hungarian county was not merely a territorial division, it was also a noble corporation which governed the district, and, as such, spoke of itself officially as "*Nos, Universitas Comitatûs ——ensis*," "We, the Corporation of the County of ——," a style which the great centralist, Joseph II., commanded to be discontinued. Its individuality was felt and understood even by the uneducated classes. As it was composed exclusively of "nobles," and was administered by their "worships" the elected magistrates, the county itself was styled "worshipful and noble." I once observed to a Hungarian friend that the sword, which is the only weapon carried by the county heyduks, or constables, was a very awkward and unpractical one. He answered, "It is enough for

the peasant that he knows that the heyduk is sent by the county." When there is a row in the village pothouse, the village judge goes in, armed only with his stick, and, as he shakes it over the heads of the rioters, he cries, "I should only like to see the boldest of you dare to take this stick out of my hand: it is the stick of the worshipful and noble county." So, too, in Mr. Jókai's novel, *The New Landlord*, the swineherd informs the uninitiated stranger that no robber would be so unprincipled as to steal pigs from another's drove while the swineherd was "called to the county," *i. e.* was under examination before the magistrates, or confined in the county gaol. So, too, in one of Petöfi's best descriptive pieces, depicting a lonely *csárda* going to ruin, he represents the hostess grumbling against the "county," for having extirpated her best customers the *betyárok*.

The county assemblies for administrative or legislative purposes were called "congregations." The ordinary "congregations" were held four times a year. Should, however, any special measure require immediate consideration, an extraordinary meeting might be called at any time. Every three years there was held what was called a *restauratio*, at which the county magistrates were elected for the next three years. The evils of such a system do not require to be specially pointed out. Hungary suffered to a great extent from all those abominations which

are complained of in many American States as the consequences of the popular election for short terms of judges—a class of men who ought everywhere to be carefully preserved from all temptations to demagogy. At the same time it should be observed that only the judges in the *first* "forum" were elected. The *táblabírák* summoned by the *alispány* to sit as judges in the judicial court of the county had been nominated by the *fő-ispány*, or Lord-Lieutenant. So, too, the judges in the higher courts, in the *kerületi szék*, or court of the "circle" (the whole country was divided into four circles), and of the courts of appeal at Buda, were appointed by the Crown.

Although, theoretically, all "nobles" were equal in the "congregation," practically that assembly was almost always in the hands of those who were rich enough to purchase support, or eloquent enough to persuade their fellows. Education, ability, either in debate or in administration, social rank, and wealth, had as much influence there as elsewhere. And the institution was not without its good effects. The habit of debating and voting in the county assembly carried the theory and practice of constitutionalism down to almost the lowest grades of society. It kept alive in the Hungarian people that enduring and intense interest in home politics which even now must strike the English traveller who has mourned over the servility and indolence of Frenchmen and

Germans. If the Hungarian's zeal is not always according to knowledge, it is at any rate something much better than apathy.

The most important of the officers of the counties were elected for terms of three years at the so-called *restaurationes*. To this rule, however, there was one important exception. The official who stood highest in rank was nominated by the Crown. This was the *fő-ispány* (Latin, *Supremus Comes*—German, *Obergespann*), or Lord-Lieutenant, as we may, perhaps, venture to call him. Next to him in rank and authority was the superior elected official called the First *al-ispány* (*Vice-Comes*, *Erster Vicegespann*). In ordinary times the relations between these two officers may be compared to that which exists between the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor of the English universities. The *fő-ispány* took precedence in rank, presided at grand pageants, gave good dinners, represented the county at Court and in the Upper House, of which he was *ex officio* a member, even if not by birth a magnate, which was generally the case. On the other hand, the real administration of business was in the hands of the First *al-ispány*. This was, perhaps, not so much a matter of right, as a consequence of the courtly magnates who, for the most part, filled the office of *fő-ispány*, being absentees and neglecting their duties. At any rate it was the duty of the First *al-ispány*, as chief of the staff of county

magistrates, to see that the municipal privileges of the county were not encroached upon by the nominee of the Government. Unlike certain States of the American Union, the Hungarian counties never dreamt of any right of secession; but they not only claimed, but even exercised, a limited right of nullification. During those long intervals in which no Diet was held, when the *Statthalterei* or Council of Lieutenancy in Buda issued an ordinance to the Lord-Lieutenant, or in his absence to the First *al-ispány*, it was the duty of that magistrate to call the "general congregation" of the county, and submit the ordinance to them for approval or disapproval. If the assembly considered that the ordinance was illegal and unconstitutional, that the Crown had overstepped the limits of the prerogative in issuing it, they laid it aside with all due respect; and the administration of the county went on as if no such ordinance had ever been issued. "*Ponamus ad acta*" was the phrase they employed on such occasions. In case a Lord-Lieutenant, particularly subservient to the Government, attempted to carry into execution such an ordinance without first submitting it to the "*congregatio generalis*," he would find himself confronted by an insuperable obstacle in the passive resistance of the whole body of elected magistrates.

The reader will by this time understand why the Hungarians called the counties "bulwarks of the con-

stitution." M. de Gérando, a Frenchman naturalized in Hungary, in his book entitled *L'Esprit Public de la Hongrie*, characterized these "congregations" as *une multitude de diétines*. It is also evident that these bulwarks were, after all, but a very imperfect defence of liberty. If I may be allowed to illustrate the state of things by another military simile, I should say that the Hungarian constitution was not defended by a standing army conducting a regular campaign, but by a number of local militias, carrying on a guerilla warfare against the Government, and only occasionally uniting to fight *en masse*. The history of Hungary during the last century and the first half of the present, abundantly demonstrates the imperfect resistance which such bodies were able to make against the central government, always arbitrary and often illiberal in its tendencies. If, however, the "congregations" had been suspended, together with the Diet, the power of even protesting would have been lost altogether; and the Hungarians, as a constitutional people, were strongly attached to this right of protesting. That, however, they knew how barren of results this right often was, is shown by the popular proverb, "To protest and to go into a public-house are allowed to everybody."

In some counties besides an ordinary "congregation," called *congregatio generalis*, there was occasionally held a *congregatio particularis*. One of the great

number of country gentlemen, from whose answers to my questions I have derived most of my ideas of the "county system," told me that a "particular congregation" was only held in large counties or where the county town was not easy of access to the whole noble constituency. His own county was a small one, and there such meetings were unknown. Another explanation of the matter was given me by one who had several times been elected *alispán* of a large county in the north. He said that when an *alispán* intended to do something unpopular, for which he feared that he should be called to account, he shifted the responsibility off his own shoulders, in part at least, by calling together such *táblabírák* and other influential "noblemen" as he could rely on, laying the matter before them, and then acting with their approval. My informant added with evident self-satisfaction that he had never once in his whole career as a magistrate convoked a "particular congregation," but had always taken on himself the responsibility of his own actions.

The counties were divided according to their size and wealth into three classes, and the officials of each several county received a large or smaller salary according to the class to which their county belonged. The county itself levied the so-called "domestic tax," or, as we might call it, county rate.

Amongst other purposes to which this was applied

was the payment of the county officials. As the greater part, at least, of these officials were "nobles," while, on the other hand, only non-nobles paid the domestic tax, it will be easily seen why these municipalities were obliged to submit their budgets to the *Concilium Locumtenentiæ.*

But no sketch of the Hungarian counties would be sufficient without mention of the *táblabíró* (plural: *táblabírák*). Literally interpreted, this word, — as important for the student of Hungarian human nature as the word *betyár* itself,—means "table-judge." In Latin he was called *tabulæ judiciariæ assessor.* Like our own justices of the peace, he received no salary for his services; at least, such was the case in most counties, but on this point, as indeed on almost every other, there was considerable divergence in the practice of these municipalities. These *táblabírák* were so designated because they sat round the "green table" in the county hall and acted as judicial assessors in the county court presided over by the First or Second *al-ispány.* They were nominated by the *fő-ispány* of the county, and their number was unlimited. Hence the word has come, like our "squire," to mean a country gentleman, and at once calls up in the mind of a Hungarian a peculiar type of character, chiefly distinguished by a certain good-hearted, sturdy conservatism, at once moderate and narrow-minded.

The use of the word implies either praise or blame,

according to the temper of the speaker using it, or the circumstances of its application. The *táblabíró* had a stake in the country, while, at the same time, he could seldom hope for any distinction beyond the narrow bounds of his own county. He was therefore averse to violent changes or an adventurous policy, and his conduct is consequently praised as contrasting favourably with that of penniless, landless demagogues, or denounced for its ignorant caution and its effects in retarding the progress of the nation toward civilization. He opposed the encroachments of the Viennese Government with a courage and an obstinacy which he had inherited from his ancestors; but he regarded with suspicion and obstructed with a certain *vis inertiæ*, which must have been experienced to be rightly understood, the reforms of Széchenyi and the revolutionary violence of Kossuth. The latter, it is true, carried him away for the moment, as an inundation may carry away a deeply-rooted oak-tree, but it was with reluctance and many murmurs against the "*gebildcte Proletariat*," the "educated beggardom," of newspaper scribes, briefless lawyers, beardless youths, and landless adventurers, that he fought by their side against the detested and perjured "German." His manners were distinguished rather by cordiality and a certain homely dignity than by the elegancies of the *salon*. His relations with the peasantry were patriarchal. He certainly did not undervalue his superior

rank, but wished to use the advantages it gave him for their benefit. His relations with the magnates,—the aristocracy, in the English sense of the word,—were too often marred by envy and mutual contempt and suspicion. To them he was fond of applying the doctrines of '89, and asserting the natural equality of all men,—meaning, though perhaps unconsciously, of all "Hungarian noblemen."

It may be objected to the above sketch of the *táblabíró's* character that it contains traits inconsistent with each other. Such will always be found in the portrait of a large class, consisting of individuals differing widely from one another in character, and not always consistent with themselves. Squire Western and Squire Allworthy belonged to the same class, and lived at the same time and in the same county. And here I may observe that an English traveller in the country districts of Hungary can hardly help observing the close resemblance between a very large section of the Hungarian squirearchy and a class which railways and lending libraries have almost, if not completely, effaced in England. Some of us have seen some of the last specimens of the old leather-breeched squires. Those who have not, have, at least, heard of them from their elders; while the class itself has been portrayed by Addison and Fielding, and many other satirists. Those persons whose vague ideas of Hungary and the Hungarians

have been derived from the accounts given of themselves by the Hungarian emigration and worked up by German journalists and book-makers, will, perhaps, be surprised when I say that the most disaffected section of the Hungarian landed gentry reminded me vividly of our own Jacobite non-juror squires in the first half of the last century. Squire Western is, of course, a highly-coloured caricature, but I can imagine that the model from which it was drawn must have presented no small likeness to many a *kurucz táblabíró* in the more out-of-the-way counties of Hungary. His hard swearing, his hard drinking, his intense hatred of the Germans—"Hanover rats," as he called them—his detestation of that "hateful tax," the excise, and those "wretches" who collected it, of the national debt, and the monied class who thrived on it, his persistent denunciation of the foreign policy of the Government, which he considered, not without reason, to be opposed to the true interests of the nation, and last, but not least, his invincible prejudices and unmeasured invectives against courtiers, and the higher ranks of the aristocracy, as men who explained "their country's dear-bought rights away," and sold her for pensions and decorations,—all and every one of these peculiarities find their counterparts with astounding exactness in many of the old school of Calvinist country gentlemen, to whom unflinching opposition of the "German" government has descended,

as a part of the family inheritance from the days of Botskay and Rákóczy.

At the same time, it must be observed that history, like nature, never repeats itself. If the points in which these two classes resemble one another are striking, those in which they differ are not less so. While one of these parties held fast to the doctrines of the Caroline divines touching the sacred duty of non-resistance; the other appeals occasionally, with no little inconsistency, to Rousseau's theory of the "Rights of Man," and other kindred speculations. The Jacobite squires belonged, in theory, at least, to the party which is opposed to liberty and liberalism. Their doctrines were pithily summed up in the lines:

> And damned are they that do resist,
> Or touch the Lord's Anointed.

The Hungarian *táblabírák* of the present century belong, in theory at least, to the opposite party—to the party one of whose members quoted to me with intense appreciation Byron's line,—

> Each brute has its nature; a king's is to reign.

A country gentleman in Bihar, at whose house I was staying and with whom I was discussing the Reform demonstrations in England, sententiously summed up his view of the whole matter in the words, "One can never have too much confidence in the people." But then he was certainly no Squire

Western. And this reminds me of another remark which I ought in all fairness to make here, and that is that this old school of *táblabírák* is fast passing away; and that, if their political convictions are inherited by their sons, the hard drinking and swearing which used to accompany them will soon become a thing of the past.

Another point in which the old-fashioned squires of both countries resembled each other was in their complete freedom from the modern effeminate habit of reading. They did not impair the originality of their minds by studying the thoughts of other men. They not only did not subscribe to any circulating libraries—in their stage of civilization such institutions, indeed, do not as yet exist—but they did not even keep any books of their own, or at the most but half-a-dozen volumes inherited, perhaps, from as many ancestors. Once staying for a week at the house of such an old-fashioned gentleman, I was reduced to consult the pages of an old gazetteer of political geography, *anno* 1818, by way of refreshing my eyes with something of the nature of a book. Even if the *táblabíró* has a library it is stowed away in the darkest corner of his storeroom. To be sure there was often an excuse for this little honourable concealment of his books, as many of them were probably liable to confiscation by the police as "calculated to bring the government into contempt."

But, no doubt, why they are not placed in a conspicuous position is because our host has not yet quite cleared his mind of the prejudice that buying many books is like wearing "German" trousers, a compliance with foreign civilization unworthy of a respectable country gentleman whose fathers have been *táblabírák* since the days of the *kurucz világ;* to say nothing of the waste of money that might have been better laid out on the farm.

Another foible of the *táblabíró,* on which especial stress has been laid by his satirists, is his omniscience and consequent dilettantism. To do him justice it must be remarked that he shared this weakness with many of his fellow-countrymen who were not county magistrates. To know many things and none of them thoroughly is characteristic of the inhabitants of all new countries; and Hungary, like Russia, is in many respects as new a country as America. In such countries schools and universities are inferior because the profession of a teacher is not remunerative. Educated men are few, and when one such is found he must be employed to do the work which in more advanced communities would be distributed among several specially-trained persons. "We in Hungary," said a country gentleman to me, "who know anything are almost all αὐτοδίδακτοι." They used to remind me of Fielding's eulogy on Squire Allworthy. "Above all others, men of genius and

learning shared the principal place in his favour, and in these he had much discernment" (as shown in his patronage of Thwackum and Square); "for though he had missed the advantage of a learned education, yet, being blessed with vast natural abilities, he had so well profited by a vigorous though late application to letters, and by much conversation with men of eminence in this way, that he was himself a very competent judge in most kinds of literature."

I would at the same time caution any intending tourist against supposing that he will lightly or easily make acquaintance with these particular features of a society fast passing away. A few days spent in Pest or in the *châteaux* of a few English-speaking magnates —the most ordinary places of resort of our countrymen in Hungary—will hardly enable him to light upon the counterpart of Squire Western, or one of the last members of the *korhelz kompánia*. They are perhaps still to be found, but in spite of their old-fashioned hospitality, are not likely to reveal much of their inward souls to foreigners who can only converse with them in "dog-language" (*kutyá-ugelv*), as they are apt to call the mother-tongue of Squire Western's "Hanover rats."

It is perhaps superfluous to assure the English reader, who from the social history of his native land must know so well a similar class, that the Hungarian *táblabírák* have done good service to their country.

On this point I can hardly do better than quote the words of Baron Eötvös, a witness who cannot well be accused of partiality to the class, since the very book from which I quote the passage, his novel, *The Village Notary*, was written to satirize the very institutions to which they were especially attached. He says of one of the characters in that tale:—

"He belonged to that section of the Hungarian nobility,—alas! it is dying out every day,—which in spite of its faults and weaknesses deserves our respect for at least one cause, for having preserved to the present day the customs and the nationality of our forefathers; their want of culture, but at the same time their good-hearted simplicity; many prejudices which in our days appear downright ridiculous, but along with them the firm conviction, without which our nation would have disappeared amid its hard struggles for existence, — the conviction that *the Magyar shall never perish out of the world.* It is beyond doubt or dispute that the deserts of this class in maintaining our nationality are incalculable; and the future would display disgraceful ingratitude if it were to undervalue them; for the nobler branches of culture, whose fruits it will enjoy, will derive all their fertility from the sap of the sturdy stems on which they will have been grafted. At the same time it is certain that like everything else in the history of the human race, the houses of the Hun-

garian gentry will appear in the distance of history much grander and more beautiful than when regarded more closely. If, for instance, some one of my readers were to visit Mr. Valentine Kislaky, and after driving through the gateless fence, should enter the house, whose chimney out of pure hospitality, as its master out of mere *ennui*, was always smoking, he would find, with the exception of the curs who almost tore in pieces every one who came near them, nobody in the household did his duty, and that only in the cultivation of the fields was there to be found the slightest trace of order; and I fancy that in spite of all the host's kindness, of Mrs. Barbara's pressing hospitality, nay, even of the roast-turkey which had been cooked expressly for him, he would not feel himself comfortable. In the county of Taksony this sort of housekeeping was much too common for its disagreeables to be noticed; and as the most numerous and the most lasting acquaintances are made by the mouth, and that not as the organ of speech but as the organ of eating, no one can wonder that the hospitable house was never without guests, and that old Kislaky's somewhat antiquated stories, assisted by wine of the same age, always found cheerful listeners."

Another picture of a somewhat similar style of housekeeping is given in one of Petöfi's minor poems, entitled *Pató Pál úr*, "Mr. Paúl Pató."

"Like some prince lying under a spell beyond the Operenczia,* Mr. Paul Pató lives surlily by himself in his village. Ah! how different would life be here if a young wife—— Mr. Paul Pató breaks in with 'Eh! we shall get to that presently.'

"The house is in a tumbledown state, the mortar is crumbling off, and the wind has carried away a piece of the roof Heaven only knows whither; let us repair it, or in no long time the sky will look in through the ceiling.——Mr. Paul Pató breaks in with 'Eh! we shall get to that presently.'

"The garden is a waste, but in its place the ploughed land blooms beautifully and brings forth abundantly all sorts of wild poppies. Why are these many servants idle? why these ploughs?——Mr. Paul Pató breaks in with 'Eh! we shall get to that presently.'

"Then that jacket, those breeches are so worn, so old, that they would scarce serve for a mosquito-net, but in case of necessity; one has only to call the tailor, the cloth has been bought long ago.—— Mr. Paul Pató breaks in with 'Eh! we shall get to that presently.'

"Thus he protracts his existence; and although his fathers left him everything in such abundance, he

* The circular stream which, according to the mythology of the Hungarian peasant, surrounds the world, like the ocean of the ancient Greeks. Fairyland lies like an island in the midst of its waters.

never has anything. But this is not his fault; he was born a Hungarian, and in his country it is an ancestral maxim: 'Eh! we shall get to that presently.'"

A more complete and, if I may use the expression, a more intimate description of a *táblabíró's* character is given us by Mr. Paul Gyulai in a short tale entitled "*The Last Master of an Old Manor-house.*" Of course every portrait by a true artist does not represent merely the features of a class, but contains at the same time individual traits. In the present instance the specimen portrayed has, besides, Transylvanian peculiarities, as well as others produced by the exceptional character of the time in which the scene is laid—that of the year 1850. He will, however, serve as a very fair illustration of the character of the Hungarian county magistrates.

"On such occasions he spent most of his time in reading. He got together his remaining books; once more he studied carefully Hungarian law and Hungarian history, and was absorbed in political reflections. Strictly speaking, he had not belonged to either of the two great parties which had been contending in Transylvania for a quarter of a century* both in the county meetings and in the Diet. He did not belong to the governmental party, nor did he go entirely with the opposition. He was by temperament

* From 1823 to 1848.

inclined to conservatism, but his susceptibility to new ideas and the influence of public opinion attached him to the cause of reform. He was, in fact, an honest squire, a worthy Hungarian gentleman, who was prouder of his ancestors than of his privileges, in whom old and new ideas were combined in a peculiar mixture. He attached great importance to keeping up the dignity of his rank, but at the same time behaved with fatherly kindness to his peasants, and on questions relating to *urbarial* relations * he always voted with the liberals. His horizon was contracted; he looked at the world through the windows of the county-house, but instinctively recoiled from an aggressive, hazardous line of policy. He did not read much; he said little; but was all the more active as an official. He was a zealous patriot, ready to make sacrifices for his country, and clinging with ardent hopes to her future. But he had now become a pessimist.

"Although he passed through the revolutionary period on his sick bed, and had only been a few weeks at home, his political feelings had become entirely changed. Opposition had developed itself in him into the intensest hatred against the Government, while at the same time he had contracted an abhorrence of all reforms. He reproached himself for having lent his aid to overturn the foundations

* Relations between landlord and peasant.

of the time-honoured Constitution of his country. His kindly feeling towards the people disappeared. Why, was it not his own Wallach peasants who had ruined his manor-house, the very men to whom he had done so much good in his private capacity, whose interest he had always defended on the field of politics? He held strong opinions upon the hasty and premature character of the late reforms in both private and political matters, and the more he studied the old Hungarian laws, the more he admired the old Constitution and the wisdom of his ancestors. He could now see no fault in it anywhere. He read with favourable eyes every obsolete statute, he mourned over every abrogated institution, and believed that he had discovered the politician's philosopher's stone in the organization of the counties. He who had once been a man of action, who did not trouble himself about theories, now that he was condemned to inaction became a speculative dreamer. In imagination he lived in the past, and especially occupied himself with the question, 'In what way ought the Hungarian nation to have developed itself?' His favourite hobby was the notion that democratic ideas had brought the Hungarians to ruin. He turned from the present to retrace on the page of history the eternal glory of the Hungarian nation, understanding thereby the nobility. 'The nobility acquired this country,' he argued to him-

self; 'and, well or ill, knew how to keep it in the midst of the greatest difficulties and dangers; at last it passed into the hands of the democracy, and they lost it at once and for ever.'"

Every county was divided into several *járások*, "circuits" or "hundreds." Over each of these presided an elected county official, entitled *szolgabíró*, literally "servant-judge," so called because he had jurisdiction, not only over non-nobles, but also over nobles (*servientes*), who served the king in war. His Latin title was *judex nobilium*, colloquially abridged to *judlium*; in German he was called *Stuhlrichter*. When Baron Eötvös, in his novel *The Village Notary*, to which we have already referred, introduces a *szolgabíró*, he observes:—

"If I were writing for foreigners, I might here insert under an asterisk a pretty dissertation about the office of a *szolgabíró*, and perhaps my lady readers, who in their lives have met and conversed with so many such, do not suspect how many and how important are the occupations with which their best partners in the dance are burdened—occupations whose description by a laborious writer fill two thick volumes. As, however, my story is far from having any political tendency, it may be enough for me to say for the benefit of the uninitiated that the office of *szolgabíró* is beyond all question the most laborious and the most fatiguing in the world. He is the

maintainer of the public peace, the protector of rich and poor, the judge and father of his circuit, without whose intervention none can obtain justice, through whose hands ascends every complaint from below, descends every command from above. He regulates the streams, builds the roads and bridges, takes the part of the poor, and inspects the schools. If a wolf makes his appearance, he has to act as chief huntsman; if plague or murrain, he is the chief of the medical staff. He is at once justice of the peace, executor of the decrees of the civil courts, public prosecutor in criminal matters, police magistrate, quarter-master of the soldiery, inspector of the rural police, and administrator of the hospitals.

"If among the five or six hundred persons who fill this office one neglects his duty, thousands suffer. If one amongst them acts with partiality, the administration of justice has ceased over several square miles. If one of them is ignorant, as far at least as the tax-paying peasantry are concerned, the Diet makes laws in vain. Now, if my kind readers will only compare with these laborious duties the recompence they receive, and remember that, beyond a yearly salary of a hundred or a hundred and fifty florins, it consists in the certain prospect that, if he impartially fulfils the duties of his office, in three years' time he will be turned out of it by some powerful opponent, and be named *táblabíró*, they

must admit that our country contains either from five to six hundred living saints, or at the very least as many hundred thousand suffering citizens."

The portrait which Baron Eötvös has drawn of the Hungarian *szolgabíró* in his Paul Nyúzó may have been exceptional, or exaggerated, or both, but it is impossible to resist the conclusion that, from its very cheapness, the Hungarian county administration must have been perfunctory and imperfect. It would perhaps be more correct to describe it as rather the effect than the cause of the primitive, not to say semi-barbarous condition of the country.

CHAPTER XIII.

HUNGARIAN CONSTITUTION BEFORE 1848.—*Continued.—THE OLD DIET.*

The Municipia—Their Rights and Privileges—The Honoratiores—The Counties and the Government—An Election Anecdote—Unequal Distribution of Nobility—Size of the Counties—Polish Refugee—The Counties in the Diet—Other Members of the Diet—The Royal Free Cities—Votes Weighed, not Counted—The Gallery—Mr. Paget's Evidence—The Dicasteria—Gravamina.

BEFORE I proceed to speak of the old Hungarian Diet, I may as well make a few more remarks on the counties and their so-called autonomy. It is sufficiently characteristic of the position which these noble corporations held during the first half of this century that the word *municipia*, "municipalities," was commonly applied to them without any qualification. When speaking of the cities of the Alföld, I stated some of the reasons which kept the royal free cities in Hungary in a position inferior to that occupied by the towns in other European countries. The municipal franchise was not enjoyed by the mass of their inhabitants, but restricted to self-electing colleges,

called "communities." Even these unpopular bodies were not allowed free action, but had to submit all decisions on points of any importance to the Council of Lieutenancy, which body controlled the elections of the municipal magistrates. What wonder then if the liberty-loving county gentry, regarding the "Royal Free Cities" as colonies of absolutism, expressly forbade the Crown to create any new ones without the consent of the Diet, in which assembly they deprived the representatives of the cities of the right of voting.

Thus almost all the constitutional life of the country was centred in the counties. The rights and privileges of these *municipia*, before 1848, may be summed up as follows:—

1. The right of electing deputies for the Diet, and of recalling the same;

2. The right of instructing these deputies as to how they were to vote;

3. The right of local administration and of passing statutes (not contrary to the statute or common law of the realm) having force within the bounds of the county;

4. The right of electing its own magistrates; and

5. The right of watching over the integrity of the law, and thus controlling not only the procedure of their own magistrates, but even of the central authorities.

The right of passing statutes having force within their own bounds will probably strike the English reader quite as forcibly as the large amount of control exercised by these municipalities over the central legislature. It was in virtue of this statutory right that the counties amended and altered their own legislative franchise. For instance, many of them —notably the metropolitan one of Pest—between 1823 and 1848, expressly granted to the *honoratiores*, *i. e.* persons belonging to the liberal professions, but not "nobles" by birth, the right of voting in their "congregations." On this point, M. Michael Horváth, in his *Twenty-five Years of the History of Hungary*—*i. e.* from 1823 to 1848—observes:—

"The actual participation of this class in the debates of the county assemblies unquestionably augmented the political weight and importance of those municipalities. The county meetings acquired a character so peculiar that an exact parallel to them can be found nowhere in Europe. The English public meetings only express their opinions upon some question or other; but the fact of their not being invested with any official authority at once distinguishes them from the Hungarian 'congregations.' The aristocratic corporations of the old German nobility, the French *Conseils généraux*, and the Spanish *ayuntamientos*, moved in a much narrower sphere. The 'congregations' not only debated and expressed

their opinions upon political questions, but had other functions which gave them a substantial share in the government of the country."

The same writer thus comprehensively describes the functions of the "congregations." "These assemblies constituted, in fact, the governing bodies of the counties, of which, by their election of the magistrates, they controlled and directed every branch of the administration; they fixed the county budgets, levied the so-called domestic tax, and directed its expenditure; to them, as administrative bodies, were addressed the orders of the Crown and the Central Government boards, *i. e.* the Council of Lieutenancy, which sat at Buda, and the Hungarian Court Chancery, which sat at Vienna. These orders they either carried out by handing them over to the magistrates whom they concerned, or, if they considered them contrary to the laws and the spirit of the constitution, they laid them aside with respect (*cum honore seponuntur*), and petitioned the Crown or the Government boards for their withdrawal or modification. It was the county assembly which regulated the affairs of the communes situated within their jurisdiction, received their petitions, and redressed their grievances. It was the county that maintained the public peace, and acted both as judge and jury in the suppression of public scandals and the prosecution and punishment of criminals. It is true that in all these matters

the county had to conform to the laws of the realm, but wherever the law was silent or defective, they had the power of making statutes which were binding within their own limits."

It was by virtue of the statutory right above mentioned that some counties decided to restrict the right of voting in their assemblies to such nobles as either habitually resided within their bounds or possessed property in the county. Stories are told which show that this rule was not everywhere acted upon. There was a class of persons called in the Babylonish dialect of Hungarian political slang "*a magyar radicalismusnak commis-voyageur-jei*," "the commercial travellers of Hungarian radicalism." One of the most celebrated of their number was Borbély Miska (Mike Barber). On the occasion of a disputed election in the county of Bihar, Borbély brought to the assistance of the radical party 400 "noblemen" out of the adjoining county of Szabolcs, packed four and four in light open waggons, each of them driven by a peasant, who in his character of non-voter might be hoped to keep sober. When Borbély arrived at the limits of the two counties he halted the procession, and, collecting his "noblemen" around him, made them a speech, in which he alluded with the utmost delicacy to a certain frailty of human nature which leads such as are afflicted with it to appropriate a fine ox or a fine horse wherever they

may see them. "Now," continued the orator, "it is very probable that, as all of us have each our own frailties, some of our number may be afflicted by this particular weakness; I hope that those who are conscious that such is their case, will at once return home, and not bring disgrace upon their county in the eyes of its neighbours." Some of his audience conscious of their frailty turned back; the rest proceeded with Borbély to Nagy-Várad, where they spent the night preceding the election, encamped without the walls around a gallows-tree, which served to impress more strongly upon their minds the necessity of resisting all cattle-fancying temptations.

In fact the "nobles" were so unequally distributed over the country that there was as great a difference—perhaps a greater—between the Hungarian counties with respect to the democratical character of their constituencies, as there existed between the English boroughs before the first Reform Bill. It would be difficult to lay down any general rule on the subject. I fancy, however, that the highest numbers were reached for the most part in counties inaccessible to the ravages of the Turks, while in the counties of the Banat and those adjoining the "nobility" were exceptionally few. I have been told that the county of Borsod contained the greatest number, at least 30,000. Borsod, of which the county town is Miskolcz, is situated to the north-west of the Theiss. Zala, in

the extreme south-western corner of the country, was also conspicuous for the immense number of its "nobles" and the consequent turbulence of its elections. A venerable *táblabíró* of the county of Veszprém, in the centre of Pannonia, to the north-east of Lake Balaton, told me that the "nobility" there amounted to at least twelve or thirteen thousand souls. On the other hand, in the counties of Temes and Torontál in the Banat, this class was so few as to be reckoned by hundreds. In the county of Csongrád, one which had suffered severely during the occupation of the Turks, there were so few nobles, that I have heard of at least one case in which a non-noble was appointed *szólgabíró*, although it was one of the privileges of the nobility to be tried only by its peers.

I believe that it will be found that generally speaking those counties had the fewest "noble" voters in which the land was owned by a few great proprietors. For instance, almost the whole of the above-mentioned county of Csongrád is held by the two great houses of the Károlyis and the Pallavicinis. Naturally enough this county was, in the years preceding 1848, held to be one of the most conservative constituencies in the kingdom.

Besides these points of diversity, it must be remembered that the counties differ considerably in size. For instance, Bihar contains 201 German geographical square miles; the United County of Pest-Pilis-Solt,

197; Marmaros, 188; Bács-Bodrog, 186; and Torontál, 124. On the other hand Ugocsa contains but 21 such square miles; Turócz, 20; Esztergom, 19; and Torna only 11.

This diversity of character in the county constituencies serves partly to explain the contradictory epithets applied to the institution by its enemies, notably by the press of Pest, which describes a Hungarian county as an oligarchico-aristocratical ochlocracy.

How aristocratically the counties were administered may be judged from the following anecdote:—After the Polish insurrection of 1830 a Transylvanian nobleman kept a Polish refugee for fourteen years in his house. At last some one informed against him, at any rate orders came down from the central authorities to the "county" to inquire into the matter. The problem was how to satisfy their requirements without hurting the feelings of the accused. To solve this difficulty the two county officials, whose business it was to inquire into the charge, wrote a letter to the baron to say that they would do themselves the honour of dining with him on such and such a day. They further gave him a private hint, through a common friend, that it would be as well if the refugee were to spend that day at one of the noblemen's outlying farms. On the day mentioned they came and dined. Everything went off pleasantly. No allusion was

made to the real object of their visit, and the Pole was nowhere to be seen. On their return they made an official report to the effect that they had been at the baron's house, and that nothing suspicious was to be found there. The complaint was therefore dismissed as unfounded.

No circumstance conduced so much to the great political influence of the counties before 1848 as their very intimate connection with the Lower House, or, as it was called, the Lower Table, of the Diet. This Lower Table was practically composed of the delegates of the counties alone, in some respects resembling the American Senate. Just as Delaware and New York were of equal importance in the American Senate, so all the counties, whatever their difference in size, wealth, or intelligence, were represented by two delegates at the Table. Enormous Bihar—as extensive as the kingdom of Würtemberg —and metropolitan Pest had no more; Torna, the Rutlandshire of Hungary, and Ugocsa, whose insignificance became proverbial in the saying, *Ugocsa non coronat* (to designate an opposition which may be safely ignored), had no less. Such a delegate was called in the Hungarian language *követ*, in the Latin *legatus*, both words being also applicable to the ambassador of a sovereign state at a foreign court. In so strict a sense were the members of the Lower

Table mere spokesmen of the will of the counties, that it was not considered sufficient for them to receive at their elections "instructions" as to how they should act. Such cases as those of Mr. Burke in former days, and Mr. Horsman in our own, were provided against. It was part of the duties of a delegate to correspond with his constituents, and inform them of any new subjects of interest which might be brought before the Table, in order that they might be debated in the "congregation," and the result of such debate be forwarded to him for his guidance. Should he not follow the instructions furnished him, or otherwise fail to give satisfaction, he might be recalled at any time, and another delegate be sent in his place. In one word, the counties were everything in the Diet, as well as out of it.

But although the counties practically elected the ruling members of the Lower Table, it is scarcely too severe a thing to say of that assembly that it was a *Rumpelkammer*, a lumber-room, or at best an old curiosity shop. For instance, the president of the Lower Table was an official who had no necessary connection with it, to wit, the so-called "Personal" or President of the *Tabula Regia*, one of the two highest courts of appeal in the kingdom. At the Diet 1839-40 there appeared in person beside the "Personal," 21 members of *Tabula Regia*, 1 Croatian protonotary, 2 Croatian deputies, 5 abbots and pro-

vosts, 22 deputies of chapters, 102 deputies of the counties, the Count of Turopolya (a "noble" district in Croatia), 2 deputies from Jazygo-Cumania, 2 deputies from the Heyduk Towns, and 1 from Fiume. Further, there sat in the assembly 233 representatives of Roman Catholic prelates and of magnates who were absent from the Upper Table, and of the widows of magnates whose sex precluded them from personally appearing in the more august branch of the legislature. Lastly, there appeared 70 deputies from 49 Royal Free Cities, some of them sending one, some two representatives.

It can excite no surprise when we learn that the right of voting was unequally and obscurely partitioned among this mob of individuals who had but one characteristic in common, to wit, that each one of them represented something or somebody. With respect to the abbots, it may be observed that those who were appointed directly by the Crown had seats at the Upper Table; those who were appointed by inferior patrons sat at the Lower Table. They might be held to represent their respective monastic communities; but what shall we say of the young attorneys who represented magnates' widows? The sort of estimation in which they were held may be inferred from the rate of remuneration they received for their services to the country. While the "Royal Personal" received sixteen florins, the other members of the

"Royal Table" eight florins, the deputies of the counties six florins, their secretaries one florin thirty kreutzers, nay, even their hussars thirty kreutzers a day, during their attendance at the Diet, the representatives of magnates' widows were content with rent-free lodgings, which the town honoured by the presence of the Diet was bound to furnish them. It will be easily understood that there was no question about giving them votes. The clerical members of the Lower Table were, I believe, content with one vote between them all; but it was the question as to the votes of the Royal Free Cities which occasioned the greatest heartburnings.

As *peculia Regis*, these corporations were always held in a sort of tutelage by the authorities at Buda. In all of them the right of electing a deputy had been withdrawn from the mass of the burghers. In some towns it was possessed by the so-called "Outer Council," a self-electing body, consisting of from forty to one hundred and twenty persons. In other places the right was restricted to the so-called "Inner Council," consisting of ten or twelve members. Even where the "Outer Council" had the right of election, it was in most cases confined to candidates proposed by the "Inner Council." Practically, the right of voting in the Diet was denied their representatives. Indeed, as according to Hungarian law each Royal Free City was *one* "noble person," their representatives might be con-

sidered to stand on the same level as the representatives of absent magnates, and as such to be inferior to the representatives of the counties which were corporations of noblemen.

In that anarchical and chaotic mass of historical legalities which disregarded all considerations of reason, proportion, and utility, the old Hungarian Constitution, the principle "*vota non numerantur, sed ponderantur*," that the "*pars sanior*" was to prevail irrespective of numbers, was very widely recognized. It was so, not only at the Lower Table but also at the Upper Table, and in the county "congregations." Votes were only counted in case of an election. Between 1823 and 1848 measures were passed or rejected by the votes of the counties—observe, of the counties, not of their representatives. If the two delegates from any one county disputed about the meaning of their instructions, then *Null von Null geht auf*, "nothing from nothing nothing remains," the vote of the county was not reckoned at all in the division. Of course, if there was sufficient time to get clearer instructions before the question was finally settled, they were at once applied for. In reading the history of that period we find that such and such a proposition was passed or rejected by a majority of so many counties. Whenever a bill or law was passed, it was necessary that at least one delegate from each county should be present.

By this time the reader will probably regard the Diets held at Presburg as anomalous and disorderly assemblies. And yet certain elements of confusion remain to be noticed. Presburg (*Hungarian*, Pozsony; *Latin*, Posonium) is a German town situated at the furthest confines of the kingdom, whose "*philister*" citizens cared little or nothing about national politics. The gallery of the Diet was open to every one without the formality of getting a ticket. So little public interest, however, did the debates excite, that by far the greater part of the audience in the gallery was composed of the hussars or body-servants of the deputies who were in waiting to relieve their masters at the close of the debate of the superfluities of the Hungarian gala-dress in which the members of the Table had to appear. The deputies in Presburg were like a garrison in a foreign city. By way of creating an audience and a public opinion, the counties, during the notable twenty-five years so often referred to, sent up, each at its own cost, greater or lesser numbers of *jurátusok*, or law-students, who were to fit themselves for public life by attending the sittings of the Diet. These young men—indeed any one who chose to make his appearance in Hungarian costume with a sword by his side—could enter the hall in which the meetings were held, and, as I have been told, sat pell-mell with the members of the Table. Whether they had a right to express

their approbation or disapprobation of the sentiments expressed by the speakers was a moot point. As a matter of fact they did exercise the right very freely, to the no small annoyance of the *pccsvvicsek*, as the partisans of the Government were called. These made one or two fruitless attempts to banish or silence these hostile auditors, who were, however, protected by the liberal majority.

Nevertheless, we have the evidence of an eye-witness in our countryman, Mr. Paget, who was present at some of the debates of the Diet of 1835, that its meetings were more orderly than we should have expected from its composition. "Their uniform," says he,* "gives them an air of considerable dignity. Personal altercation is almost unknown; and although a tribunal exists for settling at once such cases, should they arise, no instance has occurred for more than forty years. I would not have it understood that the debates are not animated; it would be difficult they should be otherwise with an enthusiastic and warm-blooded people like the Magyars. But if the Diet is not enlivened by those yells, coughs, shufflings, and cat-calls, by which certain senators we know of are accustomed to express their dissent to a proposition, or their impatience for dinner, there is still sufficient difference between the reception of a Nagy or an A—— to declare to the merest stranger

* *Hungary and Transylvania*, vol. i. p. 35.

which is the most heeded and respected, although the other is allowed to speak, however little he may be attended to."

But, however anomalous may have been the Hungarian legislature before 1848, the system of administration with which it had to deal was equally unsatisfactory. It may be briefly described as the "dicasterial system," or government by boards. Before 1848 Hungary possessed no responsible ministry; indeed, it possessed no ministry at all. As the King of Hungary was at the same time the sovereign of a foreign state, and generally resided without the bounds of the kingdom, it was necessary that the Hungarian Chancery should be established in his *Residenz-Stadt*, Vienna. The same circumstance necessitated the establishment of another *dicasterium* at Buda, to wit, the Council of Lieutenancy or *Statthalterei-Rath*. These two bodies performed, or were supposed to perform, between them the duties of a responsible ministry in a truly constitutional state. There was, of course, this important difference—that there was no real individual responsibility in the dicasterial system. This circumstance, combined with the fact that the king was absolute sovereign of territories larger and richer, both in men and money, produced the unsatisfactory way of going on commonly called the "*gravaminal Politik*." The

Diet was called at uncertain intervals. When they came together, the first thing they did was to complain that the laws had been disregarded by the agents of the royal authority. Redress was promised; possibly the head of the Chancery might be changed; supplies were granted in consideration of promises, which, however, no one was personally bound to carry out; the Diet was dissolved; and things went on as before; and when the next Diet met everything moved round in the same vicious circle. By this time the reader will be as tired as the Hungarians themselves of the "*vormärzlich*"* state of things, and will understand the eagerness with which the reforms of 1848 were hailed by the whole nation.

* A cant term of German politics for whatever took place or existed before the revolution of March, 1848.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE REFORMS OF 1848 *AND* 1866.

Revolution and Reform—M. Michael Horváth—The Office of Palatine—The Abolition of Privileges—Parliamentary and Municipal Reform—Hungarian Parties—Paralleled in America and England—New Electoral Laws—Qualification of Electors—Already Obsolete—Imitation of France—Influence of Nobles—Exaggerated Suspicion of the Opposition—Necessity of Modernizing the Country—Patriot Conservatives—The Delegations—M. Mocsáry—Patriotic Obscurantism—Austrian Influence still feared—How to Oppose it.

THE first observation to be made about the changes which were wrought in the Hungarian constitution during the first half of the eventful year of 1848 is to consider in what sense they were revolutionary. Many persons use the words "Hungarian revolution" without any very clear ideas about the events which they mean to sum up in that short phrase, or the time in which they happened. In fact, the words are so used as to comprehend both the important social and political reforms passed in the early months of 1848 and the so-called "War of Hungarian Inde-

pendence." Now, it is essentially necessary to a right apprehension of the subject to distinguish clearly these two transactions. As M. Michael Horváth has observed :—*

"The course of events which began in the middle of February, 1848, appear at first sight to be the necessary consequences of the reform which, advancing from point to point through a quarter of a century, reached their culmination in the March of that year. For there is no doubt that, if the events of that March and April had never happened, or had fallen out otherwise, the effective cause of the following events would have been wanting ; if the independence of the nation had not been completely established in March, there would have been no need to have fought in defence of that independence in the course of the same year. Consequently, we must acknowledge that there was some connection of cause and effect between the completion of the work of reform and the War of Independence which followed. But the latter was not the *necessary* consequence of the former. The connection between them was accidental, not essential. For instance, let us suppose that the dynasty, rightly comprehending its real interests, had pursued a different course, and had either—as had

* In the preface to his *Magyarország függetlensége harczának története*, "History of Hungary's War of Independence," published at Geneva, 1865.

been once before proposed*—determined to make Hungary the centre of gravity of all its provinces, to which were to be extended the benefits of a constitution, and to make Buda-Pest the capital of its monarchy, and its own place of residence; or—as events then urgently demanded—had placed itself at the head of German aspirations towards unity, and had regarded as the goal of its own efforts, not a centralized Austrian Empire, but the Imperial Crown of a great united Germany,—would those fatal events have taken place which we witnessed in 1848 and 1849? In that case, would reform have brought forth war? Would the establishment of national independence have been succeeded by a war for its maintenance? Certainly not. Whether the dynasty concentrated itself upon Hungary, and extended its constitution to the other provinces, or acquired for itself the hegemonia of the great German Empire, not only would it have had no cause to assail the independence of the Hungarian state, but would have seen that its own interests required it to repress with all its power the discontents of the nationalities in Hungary and the revolutionary movements, the offspring of vain dreams and secret agitation.

* M. Horváth alludes to the plan of the Austrian statesman, Gentz, in 1806, of fixing the capital of the whole empire at Buda-Pest, instead of Vienna, and of changing the title of the Emperor Francis to "Emperor of Hungary."

"The war then was not a necessary consequence of reform."

To M. Horváth's arguments I have only to add that the laws embodying the measures of reform received the royal sanction of the Emperor-King Ferdinand V., on April 11th, the most important of them having passed the Diet during the preceding month, whereas the first riots amongst the Serbs in the south did not take place before April 24th, nor the invasion of Hungary by the sympathizers from Servia until the middle of June, by the Ban Jellacsics until September 11th.

How much of old-fashioned conservatism lingered in the minds of the Hungarian legislature, even in its hour of most revolutionary reform, is apparent from Article I. of the Laws of 1848—an article which has already become obsolete. The worthy Palatine, the Archduke Joseph, had died in 1847, and Article I., 1848, provided that his son, the Archduke Stephen, should be Palatine in his place. Yet the new institution of a responsible ministry rendered the office of Palatine an unmeaning anachronism. The Palatine was a sort of viceroy or *alter ego* of the King. During the king's absence he was to exercise with some restriction the *executive* portion of the royal prerogative. Some foreign writers on Hungarian affairs have spoken of this functionary as if he exercised all the powers of the Crown, but in fact he had no *legislative*

functions whatever, nor could he confer nobility nor make peace or war. The Palatine was elected by the Diet. Under the rule of the House of Austria his powers were for the most part illusory. He was, in fact, merely a prince of the blood, placed in an official position to mediate between the Crown and the nation.

Of the reforms of 1848 the most striking, the one most easily understood by foreigners, and consequently the one most widely known, was the abolition of the privileges of the "nobility"—their exclusive possession of freehold land and their immunity from taxation and from military conscription. Another, almost as important for the country, was the establishment of a responsible ministry, which at once limited the royal prerogative by giving the legislature an effective control over the agents of the Crown, and at the same time secured the independence of the kingdom against the machinations of the Austrian centralizers at Vienna. It was, however, just these measures which drew on the Hungarian reformers the hostility of the so-called Camarilla, a cabal formed of several members of the imperial family and their most intimate advisers. These brought about the insurrections of the Croats and Serbs, still later of the Wallach peasantry in Transylvania; these directed the armies of Jellacsics, Windischgrätz, and Haynau; lastly,—the crowning folly of all,—these required and obtained the inter-

vention of the Czar Nicholas and his 200,000 "immortals." These deplorable events are well known. I merely allude to them here, lest the English reader should rate both the intentions and the performances of the Hungarian Reformers of 1848 lower than they deserve when he finds that so much liberal legislation is still even now after the lapse of twenty years *pia desideria*. We should remember that the action of the Hungarian legislature was suspended for full eighteen years (1848-1866), and it is to this suspension of national legislation that we must attribute the great mass of anomalies and obsolete stuff at present to be found in the Hungarian statute-book.

Besides the abolition of the exclusive privileges of the nobility, the laws of 1848 comprise measures relating to the reform of the Diet, the reorganization of the counties, and the emancipation of the land. Let us, in the first place, consider the two first-mentioned reforms.

As a ministry could not be held responsible unless power was given it to carry out its measures, it was proposed to diminish the sphere of action of the *municipia* or counties. In the press of business—for all these important reforms were passed in the short space of three weeks—the reorganization of these corporations was not carried out. As, however, the constitution was to be no longer regarded as an ex-

clusive privilege of the nobility, the counties, too, were no longer suffered to remain mere "noble" corporations. The Diet of 1848 passed a law beginning thus:—"Until such time as the Diet, to be convoked immediately after the dissolution of the present, shall have legislated upon the point, it is ordained that," &c. &c. This provisional regulation was to the following effect:—In every county a "congregation" was to be held without delay. To this congregation were to be admitted, not only all such as under the old system had place there, but also representatives from the newly enfranchised peasant *communes*. This congregation was to elect a permanent committee, which was to exercise all the powers of the congregation until such time as the reformed Diet passed a law for the reorganization of the counties. So hurried was the legislation of the last unreformed Diet that it is not specified how many representatives of the peasants were to be called to the "congregation," nor what proportion they were to bear to the "noble" members of that assembly. It was equally vague as to constitution of the committee, merely ordaining that its numbers should be proportioned to the size of the county, and so composed as fairly to represent all its interests.

Since then twenty years have passed away, and this provisional state of things has not yet been replaced by anything more permanent. During eighteen

of those years the constitution was in a state of suspended animation. The two last years of revived constitutionalism (1867-68) found the Hungarian Ministry so overburdened with *agenda* and so weak in working power, that it has not yet been able or willing to set about the difficult and, indeed, invidious task of reorganizing those municipalities which Article XVI. of the laws of 1848 speaks of preserving as "bulwarks of the constitution."

After what has been said in the preceding chapter about the famous, or, as a ministerial journalist would say, "infamous" county system, the English readers will be surprised to hear, not that this system is regretted by a large party in the country, but that this party should sit on the left side of the House in the legislature, should style itself democratic, nay, even be reproached by some of its opponents as ultra-democratic. The fact is that in Hungary, as in America, the principal subject of dispute between political parties is the amount of power to be accorded on the one hand to the central government, be it King, Minister, President, Diet, or Congress; and, on the other hand, the amount of independence to be left to local authorities—the recognition of "states rights" and "county autonomy." Of course in Hungary the controversy is still further complicated by the question of a closer or less close union with Austria. The centralist, or, to speak more correctly,

the ministerial party, is in favour of the scheme of reconciliation carried out by Mr. Deák in 1867, while the municipalists maintained that that scheme sacrificed too much for the sake of peace and union, and, in fact, weakly, if not wickedly, gave up the independence of the country.

Besides the point of resemblance between Hungarian and American political parties which I have just noticed, there is one which reminds me of the state of England after the Revolution of 1688. The controversy is in effect one between the capital and so much of the country as follows its lead on the one hand, and the rest of the country on the other. The great titled landowners, the courtiers, the moneyed interest, were Whigs; the House of Peers was Whig; while the great mass of the English landed gentry were Tories. So at the present day Pest is Deákist. Its Jewish plutocracy, the foreign speculators, the banks and insurance offices, the majority of the literary class and the wealthier magnates, are Ministerialists; while the strength of the municipal party is to be looked for in the counties. The point in which the parallel breaks down is that the great mass of the Hungarian squires are more liberal than were their English congeners in the reign of Queen Anne; which, considering the greater facilities of communication at the present day, was perhaps to be expected.

But leaving this subject of the *municipia*, which the reformers of 1848 did not regulate, let us see what changes they effected in the legislature itself. They determined to make the Lower House of the Diet—for new things require new names, and the "Table" has become a "House"—a body representing the people, and not municipalities, whether counties, chapters, or burghs. The judges of the *Tabula Regia* ceased to be members of the assembly. The "Personal" being thus got rid of, his place was filled by a president elected by the House itself. While the old administrative divisions were still left, for electoral purposes the country was divided on a perfectly new principle. They first took out all the towns large enough to deserve at least one representative, irrespective of the historical accident of their having obtained the privileges of Royal Free Cities or not. The remainder of the country was then divided into electoral districts. Each electoral district, whether urban or rural, returns but one deputy. For instance, the twin-capital of the country, Buda-Pest, returns in all seven members to the Diet. But to do this, Pest is divided into five, and Buda into two electoral districts, each voting for its own representative. All these districts are to be as near as possible equal in point of population, wealth, civilization, &c. In order to keep this division of the country in harmony with the changing fortunes of different

localities, the Diet is from time to time to readjust this division, just as is done in the United States in the composition of the House of Representatives.

But what more than all else marked the radical character of the reforms of 1848, was the low qualifications required for the voters which it introduced. In the first place the Diet declared that it did not feel itself justified in depriving any citizen of political rights which he had previously enjoyed. Consequently all nobles, as well as all burgesses of the old "Royal Free Cities," born before the passing of the Act, retained their rights of voting. Besides these, however, all persons who belonged to the four following classes were invested with the franchise :—

1. Owners of a freehold estate, which in towns was to consist of houses or land of the value of at least 300 florins, and in the rural districts of at least a quarter of a "*sessio.*" This word "*sessio*" denotes the portion of land originally allotted to the peasant by the landlord, the rent being paid partly in kind and partly in labour. The "*sessio*" varied in different parts of the country from 60 to 120 acres.

2. Manufacturers, merchants, tradesmen, and artisans, holding a manufactory, warehouse, shop, or workshop, and keeping at least one man in constant employ.

3. All persons who derive from real or personal property a fixed income of at least 100 florins a year.

4. Without regard to their incomes, all physicians, surgeons, lawyers, civil engineers, members of the Hungarian Academy of Literature and Science, artists, professors, schoolmasters, the clergy of the Roman Catholic, Greek, and Protestant Churches, apothecaries, and notaries.

All electors, whatever may be their qualifications, must be Hungarians by birth or by naturalization, not subject to parents, guardians, or masters, nor convicted of treason, fraud, robbery, murder, or arson.

Like the other laws of 1848, those relating to the electoral franchise were rather a sketch to be filled up than a complete scheme; their importance consisted in the principles they contained—principles then for the first time imported into the Hungarian Constitution. During the twenty years which have elapsed since that great measure of reform was passed, the material condition of Hungary has been greatly altered, many new classes of society have come into existence or have acquired an importance which was not then foreseen as a natural consequence of the social changes. The party of progress—which we may designate the "modern" or "European" party—are very much dissatisfied with the imperfections of the electoral law, and demand its division. Amongst other things they complain that while many uneducated classes receive at least as much recognition as they deserve,—for instance, artisans who keep one

journeyman in constant employ, and villagers who own a quarter of a "session,"—many intelligent classes of citizens have no vote as such, as, for instance, commercial travellers, clerks, the *employés* of railway companies and on the estates of large landed proprietors. Besides this they complain that too much scope is given to the arbitrary discretion of the county officials, who are, as a general rule, violent political partisans. These having to interpret ambiguous clauses of a statute hastily drawn up, do so, or at any rate are suspected of doing so, according to the interests of the party to which they may happen to belong. Thus the electoral qualification practically varies from county to county.

In Hungary the British Parliament is generally considered to have been the model which the reformers of 1848 had before them. In reality the French Chambers under Louis Philippe were the legislative assemblies with which they were best acquainted and which they most imitated. It is perhaps necessary to inform the untravelled English reader that the members of the Lower House are paid for their services: at present each receives five florins a day, besides four hundred florins a year to pay for his lodgings.

From the foregoing sketch of the *machinery* of the Government established in 1848, it will be seen that it is sufficiently democratic. It must not, how-

ever, be supposed that the old aristocratical, or *quasi*-aristocratical, influences have therefore ceased to have any effect. The arts and traditions of government, or, to speak more accurately, of politics, are still in a great measure monopolized by the members of the "noble democracy." To change this state of things something more than mere legislation is required. A commercial middle-class must be formed which shall combine material prosperity with a regard for the "things of the mind." Still the growth of such a class may be assisted by large measures of legislative reform, tending to modernize and Europeanize the country. And it is just because such large measures of reform are so urgently needed that I myself consider the policy of the "municipalists,"—of the party favourable to local independence and decentralization—a mistaken one, although the sincerity of their patriotism is undoubted. They themselves are afraid that the Central Government at Pest, the Ministry and the majority of the members of the Diet may be so much under foreign influences as to endanger the nationality and actual independence of the country. I think their fears on this score, if not wholly unfounded, very much exaggerated. They are traditions derived from a state of things to which the rout at Sadowa gave the *coup de grace*. At any rate the measures which they propose for averting this very doubtful evil would retard the civilization

of the country by giving the obscurantism of the provinces a veto on the superior enlightenment of the capital. In times of revolution—and reform is merely revolution in a less violent and repulsive aspect—in times when great changes are necessary, it is of the greatest advantage to a country to have political power concentrated in as few hands as possible. What the Hungarians at present suffer from is too much of the *stare in antiquas vias*, too much of the "wisdom of their ancestors," too much simple conservatism. By simple conservatism I mean conservatism not blended and complicated with the defence of class interests,—as it is, for instance, in England and Prussia. This is especially shown in the inadequate and old-fashioned character of the means taken to educate the people, to extirpate robbers, and to do many other things which were perhaps not required to be done while Hungary was avowedly a mediæval country and content to remain such, destitute of railways, roads, and commerce. On this account I, for my part, do not wish to see the Upper House of the Diet rendered as yet a more efficient branch of the legislature, still less to see the counties enabled to clog the legislative machine.

Placed as they are between a gigantic Russia which almost realizes the ambitious dreams of the most ardent Panslavist, and a Germany which every day tends more and more towards unification, the

fate of the Magyars depends upon their appropriating and enlisting on their own side the forces of civilization and the sympathies of Western Europe. They must make up for their deficiency in numbers by a superiority in wealth, culture, intelligence, and order. It would be unfair to the municipalist party not to admit that they, too, are aware of this necessity. But then they are agitated by other fears which we Western Europeans can with difficulty understand. Rightly to appreciate their force requires an intimate knowledge of the Hungarian mind. They do not object to civilization, but it must be civilization wearing a Hungarian garb, speaking the Hungarian language, thinking Hungarian thoughts. Hungary inhabited by men who did not speak Hungarian, who set no store on preserving the political identity of the Hungarian kingdom, would be no Hungary for them. And this is the terrible picture which they always keep before their eyes when judging of the probable consequences of any change or reform. They do not ask: "Will this make me or my fellow-citizens richer?" But "Will this leave us as good Hungarians as we were?" This is in a great measure the reason why they desire the continued predominance of the agricultural class in political and social life. Merchants, literary men, lawyers, magnates, may be of any nationality, may be of none. He who lives in a village and cultivates the fields his forefathers

have for generations cultivated before him, will remain faithful to the inherited traditions of his nation.

Considerations of this kind—from which few Hungarians, certainly not M. Deák, are free—had a great deal to do with the institution of the "delegations" from the legislatures of Hungary and Cisleithania, which form a sort of joint parliamentary committee, annually convoked *ad hoc*, to regulate those matters of public policy which affect both halves of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The two delegations are expressly forbidden to meet for common debate. A certain amount of discussion is allowed between them, but it must be carried on in writing. Address, reply, rejoinder, are to be drawn up in the language of the delegation which sends them, accompanied by an authoritative translation into the language of the delegation to which they are sent. Should such discussion not result in agreement, the two delegations then meet,—but only to vote in silence and by ballot.

Mr. Mocsáry, in a pamphlet entitled *A Kérdések Kérdése*, "*The Question of Questions*," which appeared in 1866, has stated with remarkable clearness the terrible consequences which, in his opinion, would result from Hungarians sitting at Vienna in a legislature common to the whole Austro-Hungarian Empire. He asks, in the first place: Who would be sent to represent the nation in such an assembly? Naturally,

such Hungarian politicians as could express themselves in German, not only with fluency but with eloquence. As Mr. Mocsáry truly observes, but few men are gifted by nature with the faculty of making themselves complete masters of two languages. But few are born orators even in their mother-tongue. The consequence would be that Hungary would be represented at Vienna by the least Hungarian of Hungarians, by men to whom not Hungarian, but German was their mother-tongue. In every country it is the upper classes of society who are the least national. Of no country, perhaps, is this more true than of Hungary. Every ambitious father's principal care would be to make his son a complete German. With the German language would come German ideas, German modes of thought, German feelings; and thus Hungarians would be divided into two unequal classes — the denationalized and ambitious few whose talents would no longer serve the cause of their country, and, on the other hand, the Abdiels of patriotism, who, spurning civilization as the wages of treason, would retire to their lonely farms, would deny their children the advantages of education, lest they, too, might be infected by the example of triumphant apostasy, and would gradually die out "the Indians of the Old World at once pitied and extirpated."

Persons unacquainted with Hungary may perhaps

consider this picture drawn by Mr. Mocsáry over-coloured. It is, however, a fact that after the catastrophe of 1849 many Hungarians determined that their children should not have a liberal education, as they would rather they became peasants than officials under the German government. This feeling prevailed to such an extent as to affect largely the number of entries in the High Schools of the Calvinists, whose pupils are almost exclusively Magyars. "Rather death than dishonour," was the answer I got when I pointed out that such a course was the one most certain to ensure the extinction of the Magyar nationality and the absorption of the Hungarian kingdom.

But now the end desired by Mr. Mocsáry has been obtained. Magyar, instead of being obliged to retreat to its "primæval forests"—to use his favourite metaphor—is enthroned in the national capital, Buda-Pest. Yet the Left still pursues the same policy of suspicion against the Hungarian Ministry which it had before pursued against the Viennese Government. It still believes in the existence of a *camarilla* of high-placed personages, not only willing but able to corrupt a majority of the representatives of the people with stars and crosses, pensions and place. Although Austria, thus they reason, may have received her death-blow at Sadowa, she may survive it long enough to destroy us before her own final extinction. But besides this anti-Austrian tradition

there is another powerful motive animating the anti-ministerial party. This is none other than the exaggerated, not to say groundless, prejudices against strangers, nay, even against neighbours, which mark a semi-barbarous people. Mr. Bagehot truly observes of such a stage of civilization: "If the next parish is a little suspected, the next county is much more suspected. Here is a definite beginning of new maxims, new thoughts, new ways: the immemorial boundary mark begins in feeling a strange world. And if the next county is dubious, a remote county is untrustworthy. 'Vagrants come from thence,' men know, and they know nothing else." "*Bitang*," a word primarily applied to strayed and impounded cattle, is the epithet applied by the "*civis*" of Debreczin to foreigners, *i. e.* all born outside the territory of his own town, who come to seek their fortunes within its bounds.

From what has been said above it will be seen that the parties of the "Left," which call themselves —for they are split into two, if not three portions,— democratic and ultra-democratic, might with at least as much truth be called conservative and ultra-conservative. They persist in considering the county still threatened by its old dangers, which must be warded off by the old means. I myself consider the danger of Hungary being Germanized to be by this time reduced to a *minimum*. But even were it other-

wise, the only way to protect the Magyar character of the country is by identifying Magyarism with order, progress, and material civilization. Let them only consider how much advantage the Hungarians derived during their long struggle of eighteen years from the alliance and sympathy of European liberalism. If Germanism does ever again jeopardize the Magyar character of the country, it will be not by political, but by social weapons. But too many politicians in Hungary, as elsewhere, are ignorant of the truth contained in Goldsmith's couplet:—

> How small of all that human hearts endure,
> That part which laws or kings can cause or cure.

In their eyes patriotism is the first and last of virtues, and politics the only field on which it can be displayed.

CHAPTER XV.

THE EMANCIPATION OF THE LAND IN 1848.

Abolition of *Robot* and *Aviticitas*—Noble and Non-noble Land—Curialists and Urbarialists—The Urbarium—Russian Serfage—The Peasant's Two Masters—Peasant Holdings—Minute Legislation—Reforms of 1848—Curialists and Urbarialists confused—Consequences of Emancipation—*Aviticitas* explained—Village Administration—Judges and Notaries—"Self-Government"—Pusztas—*Commassatio*—Peasants and Gentry.

IN the preceding chapters I have noticed some of the main features of the Hungarian Reform Bill of 1848, —namely, the establishment of a responsible Ministry, the abolition of the privileges of the "nobles," the substitution of a Lower House, representing the people in the place of an assembly of delegates of privileged corporations. I must now add a few words with respect to the remaining great reform,—the emancipation of the land. This was effected by Article IX., which abolished the *robot* or forced labour of the peasants for the landlords, as also of the dues they had to pay, whether in money or in kind; by

Article XIII., which abolished the payment of tithe to the Roman Catholic clergy; and by Article XV., which abrogated the institution of "*aviticitas.*" The first set of measures freed the lands of the peasantry, the last that of the nobility, from feudal burdens and restrictions.

Up to 1848 land in Hungary was either "noble" or "non-noble." The first was not subject to the payment of direct state taxation. The land-tax was wholly raised from the non-noble land. In spite of the occasional efforts of the nobles to establish the principle "*onus non inhæret fundo,*" which meant that, if a tax-paying noble occupied peasant-land, he was not obliged to pay the land-tax for it, the Government successfully resisted this encroachment. Of "noble" land, the lord was the sole and only proprietor. In "non-noble" land, three distinct parties had an interest,—the noble landlord, the State, and the tax-paying copyholder. It is obvious that the Crown domains, and the lands belonging to free districts or to royal free cities did not, strictly speaking, fall under either of these categories. They paid taxes to the State, but no dues to a subordinate feudal lord. Noble land was not necessarily occupied by nobles. On the contrary, they often gave it out in allotments to peasant tenants. This class of tenants were called "contractualists" or "curialists," to distinguish them from the older tenants, who were called *jobbagyiones*,

"subjects," and also "urbarialists." By a somewhat loose and incorrect use of the word, the tenure of these latter tenants has been called "feudal." They were, in fact, a sort of copyholders. The dues which they had to pay to the landlord had been determined by immemorial custom. To protect these tax-paying peasants against any encroachments on the part of their tax-free landlords, Maria Theresa had a general manorial survey of the whole country taken in 1767-1773. This survey is generally known by the name of *Urbarium*, whence the tenants whose rights and burdens it defined were called "Urbarialists." In contradistinction to these, the more modern class of tenants were called "contractualists," because they had made a special contract with the lord as to the terms on which they were to hold their land, and "curialists," because the land they occupied was "curial," as forming part of the *curia* or "court" of a nobleman. The curialists paid the capitation-tax, but not the land-tax; the urbarialists had to pay both.

The Urbarium of Maria Theresa corresponds to the "Inventory" described by Mr. Shirley in his book on the *Russians of the South*. The great manorial survey was so closely associated with the queen who had ordered it to be made, that "*Lusimus Mariam Theresiam*" passed into a proverb among the Hungarian squires for a successful evasion of its provisions.

Mr. Sutherland Edwards chooses to say that "there were serfs in Hungary until 1848, and, by all accounts, they were far worse off than those of any part of Russia."* He might have known better from the description given of the condition of the Hungarian peasant before 1848 by Mr. Paget.† To take the most prominent distinction between the condition of the peasantry in Russia and Hungary, no such institution as *obrok* was known in the latter country. *Obrok*, I may observe, was the annual sum paid by a Russian serf to his master for the privilege of leaving his estate and seeking his fortunes elsewhere; for instance, as a domestic servant or a factory hand. In Hungary every peasant had the right to give up his holding and go whithersoever he pleased. His relation to the lord ceased with his occupancy of the land.

Besides which, as I observed in a previous chapter, the Hungarian peasant experienced to a certain extent the advantages of serving two masters. When the desert lands in the south of Hungary were resettled after the expulsion of the Turks, the Government took care, first of all, to allot the best fields to the tax-paying peasant, while the tax-free nobleman only got a share of the fields of inferior quality. Even now in the Banat, land has two prices, according

* *The Russians at Home*, p. 130.

† *Hungary and Transylvania*, vol i. chap. xi.

as it was "noble" or not (*Herrngrunde* or *Bauerngrunde*); the latter being the dearest. The Government, in its anxiety to keep up the number of tax-payers and the area of taxable land, regarded with extreme suspicion the conduct of the lord towards his peasantry. He was not allowed to evict them, except for certain definite reasons set down in the law. These copyholds were hereditary. Should, however, the copyholding family die out, or be evicted, the lord was not allowed to occupy the holding himself, but was obliged to give it to another non-noble tenant. A peasant who held a whole "*sessio*" was called a "whole peasant." This session varied in the different parts of the country from sixteen to forty *Joch* of arable land, and from six to twenty-two *Tagewerke* of meadow. A session might be divided into four parts, and so generally was it thus divided into quarters, that a "quarter peasant" may be taken as the average of his class in the better parts of the country. The same paternal interference of the authorities, not only limited the subdivision of these peasant holdings, but also restricted their accumulation. A peasant might not hold more than one session in an urbarial estate, in which the number of sessions did not exceed forty. In like proportion he might acquire two, three, and even four sessions; but four sessions was the maximum of land he was allowed by the law to acquire, however large might

be the urbarial estate (*dominium*) to which he belonged.

In spite of these regulations it very often happened that a landlord could not find a tenant who would take a vacant quarter of a session. In such a case, after a certain lapse of time, he obtained, on application to the authorities, permission to break it up into smaller allotments, which he assigned to *zsellérek*, or cottagers. Of this class there are a great number in Hungary, but many of them, doubtless, date from a period antecedent to the *urbarium*, or are settled on curial land.

As an instance of the minuteness of legislation on this subject, I may observe that the lord was not only allowed, but even obliged, by the urbarial law of Maria Theresa, to set fire to the roof of such urbarialists as remained in the vineyards after the vintage had been gathered in. I was told that this regulation was made because such cotters were apt to become thieves and robbers. Nevertheless, there were in several parts of the country curial cotters, who lived in the vineyards all the year round.

In 1848 the Hungarian liberals considering that the peasant had acquired a claim on the state by having borne for so many centuries a disproportionate share of the public burdens, determined to indemnify him by converting his copyhold farm into a freehold estate, at the same time compensating the landlord

out of the public treasury. Indeed, during the many years' agitation which preceded the reforms of '48 many landowners enabled their subjects to buy their freedom at a moderate price. In so doing they were certainly actuated by motives of the purest patriotism and philanthropy, and their conduct had doubtless a very beneficial effect in preparing the public mind for general measures of emancipation. At the same time it cannot fairly be disputed that the massacre of the Gallician landlords in 1846 by their peasantry at the instigation of some Austrian officials, contributed its part towards impressing upon the Hungarian landlords a sense of the untenableness of their position.

When the urbarial tenants were thus converted into freeholders, the curialists, whose relations to the lord seemed to them so similar, not to say quite identical, thought that they also should be allowed to keep their holdings without fulfilling the terms of their contract. During the troubles of 1848-49 many of them actually did so. It was only after peace had been re-established by the complete triumph of the Austrian Government, that the landlords could commence suits in the civil courts to enforce the payment of their dues by the curialists; which suits it took a long time to decide. In 1862 a small landed proprietor, who had had recourse to the Austrian courts in this matter, and had gained his suit, told me that since 1859, when the prestige of the Austrian Govern-

ment was weakened, and the more excitable portion of the population expected Garibaldi, his curialists began again to refuse payment. "And now," said he, "I will leave them alone; for it is better that I should lose my rents than that they should set my house on fire over my head."

Indeed, not the tenants only, but the landlords also, confused from interested motives the two classes of urbarial and curial cottagers. Although the Government paper given them as compensation for the land was not actually equal to it in value, they preferred to take it rather than to run the risk of having continually to have recourse to the law courts to compel refractory and litigious peasants to fulfil their obligations. As for the tenant himself, he naturally made no objection to the substitution. Provided he got his land rent-free, he cared not under what title he was relieved from his burdens. So that nobody suffered, unless it was the Government and the general tax-paying public—the parties who everywhere, but especially in the East of Europe, are the least able to defend themselves against fraud.

No unprejudiced observer can have any doubt of the permanent advantage to the country at large from the emancipation of the peasant-lands. There can be as little doubt that the class of "noble" landlords suffered severely, as the great majority of them were perfectly unprepared for the change. In

the slovenly system of agriculture which was fostered in both lord and peasant by the institution of *robot* or forced labour, which formed the greater portion of the rent of these copyhold farms, the lord had not only no experience of what paying regular wages meant, but he had not even draught cattle or agricultural implements. These he had to buy as he best could, for his stock of ready money was, generally speaking, very small. He was compensated for the land taken away from him and given to his former "subjects" by Government bonds bearing interest. Of these, a large mass were at once thrown upon the money-market, and sold considerably below their value. Many landed proprietors were besides in debt through their passion for what they called "*extension*," that is, the purchase of additional land, if not through even less excusable forms of extravagance. To all this were added the pecuniary losses caused by the War of Independence, patriotic loans, military requisitions, and, after the final defeat of the Hungarian armies, fines, confiscations, imprisonments, and forced military service. Who can reasonably wonder that so large a proportion of the Hungarian gentry are involved?

It was fortunate for the country at least that the reforms of 1848 had abolished the institution of *aviticitas*. The estates of a Hungarian nobleman were, before those reforms, but imperfectly alienable.

As they had been granted to a family for ever, they could be only pledged in perpetuity, and that only to another nobleman. Jews were incapable of acquiring any real property whatsoever, nor could peasants or burghers become the owners of the fee simple of noble lands. When the family died out, the fief reverted to the Crown. When land changed hands, it was the custom to set down in the deed of sale as the purchase-money a sum twice as large as was actually paid. For at any time the descendant of the vendor could redeem the estate of his ancestor by repayment of the purchase-money, *plus* the estimated value of the improvements effected by the capital of subsequent owners. Under this institution, the title to land was even more uncertain in Hungary than it is in England. Scarcely any landed proprietor could feel sure that a lawsuit might not be instantly brought against him to oust him from his estate. One very common ground for such a suit was an allegation that an ancestor of the proprietor, or an ancestor of some one from whom the estate had been in any way previously acquired, had been concerned in one of the many insurrections of the seventeenth century, and had been branded with the *nota infidelitatis** (stigma of treason), which involved confiscation of his

* Also called *nota Rákócziana*, after Prince Francis Rákóczy II., whose immense estates, stretching from the North-eastern Carpathians to the islands of the Adriatic, were all forfeited to the *Fiscus*, after the Peace of Szatmár in 1711.

property. Fortunately, the arsenal of Hungarian chicanery furnished as many weapons of defence as of offence, so that the actual proprietor could defend himself for at least twenty years. For *beati possidentes*. Whatever services this institution of *aviticitas* may have rendered the aristocratical constitution, it of course could not be allowed to survive it for a single day, and this abundant source of obstinate law-suits was abolished by the Article XV. of the laws of 1848, which ordered the Ministry to lay before the next Diet a new code of real-property law. Owing to the troubles to which I have so often had to allude, this new code was prepared and imposed upon the country by the Austrian Government of Bach.

A great many Englishmen of the untravelled and conservative classes are apt to regard the lot of the English peasantry as superior to that of other European countries. But is it so? In one point, at any rate, the English villagers are inferior, not only to the peasantry of France or Germany, but even to the barbarians of Russia and the heathens of India. They have not so much real political or corporate feeling, nor so much experience in managing their own affairs. In every village in Hungary stands what is called the *falu-ház*, "village house." There a village, like a town, is a corporation, or rather a community. Each such community has a "judge," a "little judge," and several sworn assessors. For

the office of so-called "judge" (*bíró*) the landlord (*dominus terrestris*, as he is called in the Latin of the Hungarian law-books) names three of the most capable of the villagers; of these three one is elected by the majority of such inhabitants of the village as possess either house or land within its bounds and appear personally at the election. The "little judge" and the sworn assessors are elected freely, without any candidation on the part of the landlord. In many villages the position of feudal landlord was so to say in commission, the urbarial estate (Latin *dominium*) belonging to several noblemen, who were therefore called *compossessores*, and shared the seigneurial rights between them. Should these during three days not come to an agreement as to the three villagers to be presented as candidates for election, their right passed to the *szolgabíró* of the *járás*, "circuit or hundred." A scarcely less—in most cases more—important person than the judge was the notary. He was engaged by the community itself, subject to the approbation of the lord, to give his services for a salary fixed by mutual contract. The commune could, with the approbation of the landlord, dismiss the notary, but the elected officers, the judges and the assessors, could be deposed from their dignities only in case of flagrant misconduct. The elections took place annually. Although the notary was only the hired servant of the community, while

the judge was its elected chief and therefore superior to him in dignity, the former was really the person who had the most real power. He was always a man of some education, and having been originally chosen for his fitness for the office, often contrived to make himself indispensable to the villagers as their legal adviser, the depositary of their secrets, or in some other way. Here, too, I ought to observe that many communities possessed the right of choosing their judges and notaries without any interference on the part of the landlords.

But even at the best the principle of aristocratical government pervaded every department of Hungarian life. The Hungarians are very fond of talking about "self-government," a point in which they suppose themselves to resemble the English; and in order to make the resemblance more apparent they have taken the very word "self-government" unchanged into their language, as they have "indemnity," "dandy," and a few other terms relating to our political and social life. But while the Hungarian county represented the principles of self-government and decentralization as regarded the administration at Buda, it represented that of centralization as regarded the village communities within its bounds. Besides which, even if the communes were free from seigneurial and comitatual interference, it must be remembered that a large portion of Hungarian soil was, so to

say, extra-communal. This was the *puszták* (Germ. *Prœdien*), literally "deserts," "wildernesses." The word *puszta* has a distinct technical meaning in Hungary. It is used in contradistinction to *falu* (village) to designate the farmhouse of a "nobleman" or a cluster of farmhouses belonging to "noblemen," together with the land appertaining, none of which is in the hands of peasant holders.

I once pressed a country lawyer as to what were the feelings of the peasants towards the gentry. He admitted that in those places where a *commassatio* was going on it often did engender a certain amount of bad feeling between the two classes. That such feelings had no influence on politics he considered to have been proved by the result of the elections for the Diet in 1848 and in 1861. The election of 1869 was as yet in the womb of the future.

Commassatio is a technical word requiring explanation. Before 1848 the peasants in a village (*falu*) were in some respects tenants in common of the lord. Nor was the lord necessarily a single person. As we have already had occasion to notice, the lordship might be held by several noble proprietors (*compossessores*), not separately but in common. I believe, however, that such joint lordship was the exception and not the rule. The forests and pastures were regarded as the property of the lord, as, in fact, was the arable land too. His peasant tenants had, however, a recognized

right to the use of them. When the arable land was converted from the copyhold into the freehold estate of the subject-peasant, his right to the use of the pastures and woods remained to him unchanged, except that it was relieved from all claim for rent or dues on the part of the lord. Before 1848 the latter had not perceived the many inconveniences arising from this joint tenure on his part with the peasants. As soon, however, as he had to pay wages and taxes, he found it incompatible with profitable farming. Nor was this joint tenure the only thing that dragged the cultivation of his land down to the level of that of the peasants. Owing to circumstances connected with the original allotment, or rather allotments of the peasant holdings, they were intricately mixed up with the land reserved by the lord. The process of *commassatio* was the remedy provided by the legislation of the Hungarian Diet shortly before 1848.

On the petition either of the lord or of the majority of his former tenants a commission might proceed to "commass" the urbarial estate. It valued the former holdings of the peasants, as also of the residue reserved by the lord, field by field, and proceeded to do the same with the woods and pastures. It then grouped or massed together on the one side the arable land that belonged to the lord, and on the other what belonged to each several peasant. This proceeding would be in the eyes of most English agriculturists an

unmixed good, as it would save the waste of time and labour involved in moving from one small plot of ground to another in a different part of the estate. Nevertheless, this process of *commassatio* has been, in the great majority of cases, entered upon at the petition of the landlord, and not of his former tenants. The latter are firmly persuaded that self-interest is the motive of all men's actions, and suspect their former landlord of a design to get more than his fair share either in quality or quantity of the ploughed fields by the help of the lawyers and surveyors, who are themselves *kabatos emberek*, "people who wear coats." Besides this, the Hungarian peasant has two distinct objections to commassation. The first is that as time and labour appear to him commodities of but little value, he sees no advantage in having his arable land collected into one or two plots instead of ten or fifteen, especially when he has to pay the expense of commassing it. On the contrary, he thinks it his interest to have his patches of land at some distance apart, so that if the crop fail in one situation it may succeed in another. His second objection is at once more important and less honourable. When the commissioners had commassed the arable land, they proceeded to divide the common woods and pastures. Now, as long as the pastures remained undivided the peasant could practically feed, to the detriment of the lord, as much live stock as his purse enabled

him to buy. In like manner, as long as the woods were held in common, it was difficult or impossible to prevent the peasant from cutting down more than his fair share of the timber. Consequently, the peasant objected to the commassation, as it furnished the lord with an opportunity of putting an end, once for all, to the encroachments of his former tenants.

There are few subjects on which a traveller can feel less sure that his opinion is well grounded, than on this same important question of the mutual relations and sentiments of the gentry and the peasantry of a foreign country. He necessarily converses more often and more freely with persons belonging to the former class, and even the peasants with whom he does come in contact identify him more or less with their social superiors, and are apt to treat him with the same insincerity which they use towards them. As far as I could judge, the relations between the two classes in Hungary are fairly good. At any rate, the Hungarian aristocracy and landed gentry always assured me that they are beloved by the peasantry. But it is, at least, significant that such assurances were always most unqualified in the mouths of landlords of high rank or large estates. The middle class of freeholders very often expressed themselves to me in terms most unfavourable to the peasant with regard to his moral character, especially his honesty and sense of justice. This may have been because they

lived in more constant and immediate contact with the class below them. Or it may have been the result of that worst form of oppression, "a poor man that oppresseth the poor." The elections for the Diet this year (1869) show that the Magyar peasant is not inaccessible to the seductions of communistic agitators. But in political matters he stands on a much higher level than does the Polish. He has risen to a conception of the *haza* (*patria*, fatherland), in whose cause he is capable of a degree of self-devotion and self-sacrifice not unworthy of his social superiors. Nor can we, in justice to the peasant, disguise the fact that the equality proclaimed by the laws of 1848 has not been accepted by Hungarian society without all *arrière pensée*. In the villages proclamations are stuck up forbidding smoking in the streets for fear of the straw-thatched cottages catching fire. Yet the "gentlemen" may be seen lighting their pipes there, explaining to the stranger as they do so that "the laws are made for the peasants."

END OF VOL I.

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